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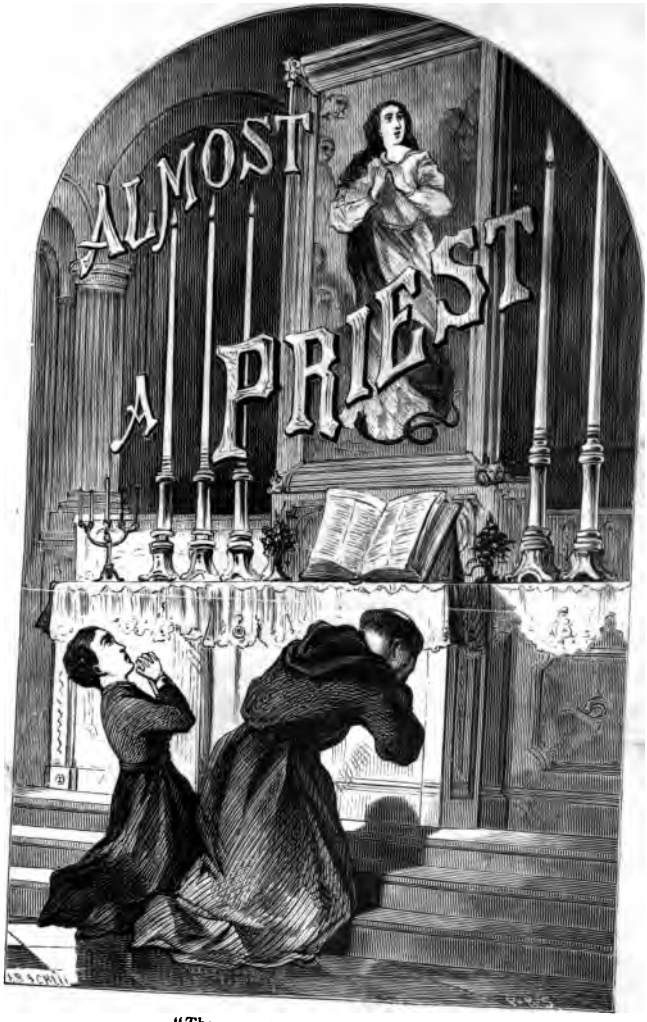

"They were Philip and Dominick."

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ALMOST A PRIEST.

A TALE THAT DEALS IN FACTS.

BY

MRS. JULIA McNAIR WRIGHT,

AUTHOR OF "PRIEST AND NUN," "ALMOST A NUN," "JOHN AND THE DEMIJOHN," ETC. ETC.

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PREFACE.

In writing of Romanism one need not deal in fiction. There is actual fact ever ready at hand. Our chief difficulty has been, not to obtain material, but among a vast mass of truth, to decide which may be put within the narrow limits of our story, and which must stand aside for future opportunity. Among so many vulnerable points, which shall be attacked? Among so many dangers, of which shall the public be warned?

Our Priests, Ansel, Arnholm, Dominick and the Northville incumbent, are drawn from real life. The extension and building of convents; the unhappy course of Viola; the wild flight of Maria Felix, are matters of actual occurrence. It is needful that we bestir ourselves against this giant evil of Romanism.

There is in this Church a mighty hostility to Americans and American institutions. We must warn and take warning. We have been reproached for writing of "Priests and Nuns who are no better than they should be." My friends, if the Priests and the Nuns were as good, as those who profess piety should be, there were no need to write about them; for then they would not be sapping all the foundations of a pure and strong political, family and individual life.

THE AUTHOR.

NOTE BY THE PUBLISHERS.

THE great favor with which "Priest and Nun" has been received by the public (fifteen thousand copies already having been sold) leads us to believe that this book will receive a hearty welcome throughout the land. Like "PRIEST AND NUN," it contains *nothing impure*, but exposes more fully the workings of the ROMISH CONVENT SYSTEM, and we send it out believing that it will be productive of much good.

ALMOST A PRIEST.

CHAPTER I.

GABRIELLE STREET.

IT was night and winter in a great city of the North. Midnight at Christmas tide. The wind whirled the snow in the street lifting it up like great giants towering, and spreading broad arms, and challenging God's good angels passing by, and then cowering low and shaking themselves out in sleet and smiting with tingling fingers the pinched faces of his houseless poor. Far and wide the Christmas bells were ringing. From the "House of Charity" and the convent of "Our Lady of Seven Sorrows" came the silver chimes of the chapel-towers. Loudly the mighty bell in the church of the Madonna answered the brazen clamor from the cathedral of St. Ignatius. The bells called worshipers to Christmas pageants, echoed in children's dreams, and, clanging through a street called *Gabrielle*, were heard by three watchers at a deathbed. Perchance the full-toned peals touched even the dull sense of the dying, after the

voices of priest and sister and son had grown faint and far away.

Gabrielle street is steep, short, narrow and dreary, having houses of unequal size, and one or two street lamps which blink dimly through the moonless nights. It has a hotel of the fifth rate, a livery stable, a brewery of poor beer, a warehouse or two, a lock and key depôt, a laundry managed by a widow, and some few suites of rooms rented to people painfully hovering on the border land of financial ruin. No more than this could Gabrielle street claim, save a profoundly melancholy factory of something nobody had ever seen fit to need.

Death had been busy here and there about the city, and on this stormy night had turned into Gabrielle street, and, going to the topmost story of one of the houses, had found Charlotte Lester waiting for him, and had even now taken her away, just as the bells began their uproar. It will be cut upon her gravestone that she was born and died when Christmas bells were ringing.

Early that evening Charlotte Lester had insisted upon being washed and dressed for burial, and now that she was gone there was little to do. A boy of twelve sat shivering before the fire which had burned low in the grate. There was a nun in the room. She had come not merely to see that the invalid was

cared for, that the dying "died in the faith," but for a deeper reason still. She drew the bedclothes straight, closed Charlotte's eyes, placed her head properly, laid her bony hands over her breast, put between them a crucifix with a rosary pendent from it, and laid a prayer-book at her feet. They were the last offices of duty — also of affection, that through long years stifled had yet lived on—and then the dark-garbed sister stood with folded hands as one dazed and stupid. A tempest was gathering in her bosom; but she was of a stolid nature, and it gathered slowly.

A priest also had attended at the deathbed. He had confessed and absolved his dying charge, had administered extreme unction and now lighted four tall candles placed at the corners of the cot whereon the corpse lay. This priest was impatient to be gone. He pulled the crucifix at the head of the body into exact perpendicular, he dipped his finger in the bowl of holy water, he eyed the candles as if considering their weight and length.

Then he pronounced a general benediction which included himself, the dead woman, the nun, the boy, and all that the room contained. After this he walked slowly up and down the room, his long gown flapping about his ankles. One might have thought him musing on life's chances and changes, as sug-

gested by this body of a lady and an American, lying amid a poverty unknown to her youth. In very truth however, he was thinking that the outer storm was hard to face, but that he must face it to go home, and he might as well be about it. He shrugged his shoulders under his round black cape; he put on his gloves and a cocked hat, and, with an ungracious nod all around and a groan over the weather and people who would so unreasonably die on stormy midnights, he went his way.

When the priest had gone, the boy dozed, the fire burned low, and the storm gathering in the nun's heart was ready to break. It rushed upon her, how years ago the dead woman and herself, both children then, waited in one home the coming of the Christ-child—how they had laughed and played together, had wept, and wiped each other's tears; and now in the going out of Charlotte's life the last tie between herself and the home and love of childhood was broken. She forgot that she was a nun dead to individual life and existing only as part of an Order, forgot that she had been buried to earth, its affections and its griefs, forgot all but that she stood by her only sister's corpse. Her heart had been buried, but it lived, and writhed and cried out in its grave. She flung herself by the dead body, kissing the cold face, fondly clasping the rigid hands, and crying out with

a love and a sorrow which an hour before might have won an answer, or cheered the parting spirit.

It was a short passion but a strong one. The boy by the fire came out of his stupor of grief and cold, to stare amazed at its ending. The dead mother might have returned to life and health, the cathedral bell might have taken human tones and spoken tender words to comfort him, the dreary upper chamber might have become a palace, and the boy would have been not more surprised than to see the nun become for one brief moment—a woman. True, she was by blood his aunt, but conventual rule had done that tie away. She was more nun than aunt. He eyed her now timidly askance. She had been the object of his reverence and fear since babyhood.

Sister Saint Maria Felix checked her emotion and betook herself to prayer before a little table in one corner of the room, tawdry with cotton cloth and lace, paper flowers and a gilt image or so. Poor as it was, it was a shrine for her worship, and that was all Saint Maria Felix wanted. As she prayed the boy mused. How vagrant is imagination even in times of deepest trouble. Fancy and memory together lead wild flights in the most awful hours. Now Philip Lester was reviewing his whole life as connected with his aunt, Sister Saint Maria Felix. There had always been an impassable gulf between

them, inasmuch as she was a saint and he was a sinner, and to him the magnificence of her saintship was so vividly contrasted with his insignificance as a sinner! He meditated on the pettiness of his transgressions—birds-nesting, irreverence in church, neglect of his catechism, losing of his rosary, and confiscation of his charity-funds to purposes of peanuts and popcorn—sins so vilely small and trifling as to put him, in his own estimation, quite beneath the lofty holiness of the nun. It seemed to him that if he had been guilty of any bold and daring wickedness as sacrilege, or heresy, or even theft or manslaughter, he would not have been overcome in her presence with such a sense of utter nothingness. Even to be regarded as deserving of reproof would have been something; but he recalled with bitterness that the priestly father fell into little naps while hearing his confessions, and never adjudged him to heavier penances than the repetition of unlimited "Aves." A lion or a panther is more respectable than a worm, thought this dismal-minded boy; and he wondered whether a great sinner does not come nearer the elevation of a great saint, than does a very small sinner. Moreover, he mournfully wished himself a traitor or a brigand, if thereby he might stand daringly confronting the holy sister, instead of crouching in terror by the fire. Two tears rolled down his cheeks as

he reflected that he was only a boy twelve years old, never greatly good nor greatly bad, and so less than the dust under the feet of Sister Saint Maria Felix.

This state of mind might be primarily referred to the early instruction of his mother, who had done homage to her sister's sanctity, had spoken of her with awful reverence and had held up to Philip the reporting of his juvenile misdoings to Saint Maria as the severest punishment that could be inflicted.

Memory recalled how on a luscious summer day he had played truant from school, and spent the idle hours in Guilbault's Gardens, seeing all the shows, feeding the portly white-breasted water-fowl, poking up the alligators that lay in the mud, swinging in the swings, whirling in the whirligigs, and playing "toss up" with three other naughty boys. He had even stayed at night to the dance, and drank a glass of beer. Thereafter had gone home weeping and penitent, and bribed his mother not to tell the holy aunt, by promising wonderful amendment. And now, alas! his mother had died and left him to no one but this aunt, to whom he dared not open his lips on any subject.

Meanwhile the holy aunt was busy at her prayers, and now that death had done away with the trivial difference in garb, the still figure on the bed looked more like a nun than Saint Maria. Maria had a

full, round, dark-skinned, dark-eyed face, that was clearly displayed by the white folds about it. It was a kind, calm motherly countenance, far better suited to grace a fireside picture with little children for a foreground, than to be stiffly set in a solitary frame for the cloister. To do her justice she was not to blame for her nephew's reveries, and was not at all conscious of his indulging in them.

Philip was the last of kin to Saint Maria, and she loved him, though she felt bound to hide her natural affection. The planning of mothers for their children, the castle-building of other women for the babes in their arms, this nun had known for Philip. She had no future for herself; she had one for him. He was a boy; he would become a man, and might become a priest. It seemed almost desecration to think it, but holy Father Pope himself and all the long succession of worshipful cardinals, reverend bishops, and venerable confessors, had once been boys; and, since that was so, why might not this boy ascend the goodly line—that to her was as Jacob's ladder reaching from earth to heaven—and become a priest, a bishop, a cardinal, even the holy Pope!

As she prayed in the corner, Saint Maria thought on these things. She had become so adept at her usual prayers, that she could tell her rosary and *think of something else* at the same time. As the

last bead fell from her fingers, she rose from her knees. Philip, with a deprecating glance at her, put some fuel on the dying fire. He was ashamed of being so earthly as to feel cold.

Saint Maria gave another tender look at the body on the bed, a faint wish rising in her heart that her sister could be buried near her early home, could find her last narrow house under the skies that had smiled over her infancy. But Saint Maria had renounced these things; she had no home but the convent, no country but the empire of the Papacy, no mother but the church, no relatives but the fraternity. She took a long dark wrap from a chair and folded it about her.

"Are you afraid to stay here alone, Philip?"

He was, but was too proud to say it, so he replied that he could stay.

"I will be back by and by," said the nun, and went out into the dark entry and groped her way down the stairs. She was used to cold and darkness, and had forgotten what it was to be afraid. She turned down Gabrielle street, finding the wind bitter and the snow deep, but plodding steadily on, came soon to the wharf where the wind had got the victory over the snow, and had driven it away, leaving only scattered drifts. Sister Maria Felix held her *head down, grasped her* wrap firmly, kept her

footing despite the wind, and waded through the drifts with a dogged perseverance. Passing the long line of wharves, she turned up a street, got under the lee of some houses, came to a brick wall, and then to a gate overarched and having a gray stone cross above it, in the angles of which the snow was finding lodgment. At this gate she stayed her steps and pulled a bell. It was a quarter of an hour before her ring got any answer, but she cowered close to the gate and waited with patience. An old man in a felt cloak unlocked the gate at last, and let her in. This aged gate-keeper was a pensioner. He gave her reverential greeting. She nodded—accustomed to reverence—and hurried across the court-yard to the doorway.

There was a small fire in a little waiting-room, and she crouched close beside it. A sound of singing came to her from the chapel—hymns of the Christmas time. The superior, the nuns, the novices and pupils were worshiping before the high altar where lay a waxen babe on a dainty bed, watched by a waxen Virgin in a robe of silk.

Saint Maria had been excused by her superior from attendance on this service, and presently went to her cell and lay down to sleep on a pallet very like that whereon her deceased sister was then lying.

Next morning Saint Maria tapped at the door of

the superior's private room, and being bidden to enter, she opened the door and knelt down just within. The superior was reading, but after a time lifted her eyes and motioned the nun to rise and approach her.

"She is dead," said Saint Maria.

"Rest her soul! We all must die!"

"There is a boy twelve years old, not too old to enter our orphan school."

"We have many orphans. What is he fit for?"

"I had hopes that he might have a vocation—become a priest."

"More likely his vocation is for a coach-box, or a shoemaker's bench—all boys are not to be priests. You can bring him here, and we shall see. Was there money for masses?"

"She had laid up twenty dollars in gold for the good of her soul—what little else she had will pay for her funeral."

"We shall have visitors on Christmas-day," said the superior. "Look to the wards, daughter Maria, and put the prettiest children at the sale cases. Are the walks cleared enough for our procession to show as it goes to the cathedral?"

Saint Maria thought the snow would not hinder the effect of the procession.

"Go, daughter. Ah, stay, she was your sister?"

"Yes, mother."

"We will have a mass said for her benefit in the chapel."

Sister Maria crossed her hands and dropped on one knee, the superior rapidly and rather indistinctly ran over a form of benediction, and the nun left her presence.

The chapel was not far from the superior's room, and between the two doors of entrance was a table with a show-case upon it, the lid of which was lifted, displaying cushions, slippers, embroidery, trinkets of fanciful constructions, knit articles and lace work. Beside this case stood a nine-year-old child, dressed in black, with a white kerchief pinned over her shoulders.

"What have you to say?" asked Sister Maria.

"Buy some of the sisters' work for the support of the orphans, and the aged sick!" said the child.

"And if they ask who you are?"

"An orphan, with no friends but the sisters."

"And what will you be when you grow up?"

"A sister, to live a holy life, and do good."

Sister Maria, having pulled the wires of this puppet enough for the time, went into the chapel to offer a prayer. The chapel was converted into a bower of evergreens, lights, and flowers for Christmas-day. It looked pretty enough to make visitors amiable—and

an alms-box stood near at hand to receive the benefit of the amiability.

Through wards, schoolroom and nursery walked Sister Maria. In each sat a nun at work, never speaking, never looking up; in each was the inevitable show-case with the child beside it, and each child had some form of speech prepared for the ears of guests.

At the schoolroom door Sister Maria was stopped and forced to stand one side. The procession from the nunnery to the cathedral was getting under way. First, two sisters—then the orphan school two by two—then two more sisters—next, the old men pensioners, each with open prayer-book—then more sisters, followed by the old women pensioners, each with open book—a nun with an alms-box containing an offering for the cathedral—another nun with a crucifix—and lastly, a liberal supply of sisters, as sisters were plenty, closed the line of march. Sister Maria had been in the nunnery sixteen years, and had seen sixteen just such processions.

Near the schoolroom was the nursery, and here was the oldest feminine pensioner with the youngest orphan, a year-old babe whose mother had died in a hospital. I think Sister Maria would have taken the little creature in her arms and kissed it, *if she had dared*, but she only looked

kindly at it, and bade a four-year-old orphan "make all the ladies buy something."

Through the halls old men pensioners strolled in list slippers and gray coats. There was one particular old man, the janitor of the previous night, who always walked about reading his prayer-book in a half audible tone, and never passed a holy water basin without dipping his finger in it and signing himself with the cross. He was supposed to be a very impressive old man before heretical visitors, and, being ready to fill "any order however extensive" for devotion, was in great demand. Indeed "religion" of a certain stamp was the particular quality of this establishment; everything smacked of it; religion pervaded the air—a sort of religion that appealed to and touched the senses. Over every ward-door was a saint's name—"St. Lazarus," "St. Elizabeth," "St. Barnabas," "St. Papin," etc. Did not one recall the length of the Romish Saint's Calendar one would be quite surprised at the number of saints that were found to be invoked. The institution as a whole was devoted to Mary, having this inscription carved in stone over the front door, "Maria Sanctissima Favete." Over the chapel-door was "I. H. S," on a cross, and "Ave Maria."

Sister Maria Felix finished the rounds. Every*thing was* in order—every bed well made up, every

window polished, every pensioner and orphan in place. The pensioner who had no feet, and was ever elaborately displaying his stumps as he sat making fish-nets, was at his work. The old pensioner, who made lace on a pillow with pins and little bobbins, was at work also. Two or three pensioners were praying in the chapel; we cannot answer for its being a rule of the place, but some few were always in the chapel at their prayers. Coming through the main hall a young woman in a cap running noiselessly and swiftly along fell on her knees before Sister Maria, and in an instant was running on again. She was a postulant, and was hastening to answer the ringing of the superior's bell.

As Sister Maria had been stopped at the schoolroom by one procession, she was hindered before the main door by another, a procession of men-servants and maid-servants and drapers and grocers' boys bringing baskets or bundles, Christmas gifts to the holy order of Franciscan Sisters at their "House of Charity." The baskets contained like the spider's pantry "good store of all that's nice," designed for the Christmas feast in the refectory. The bundles had material that would during the year be made up for clothing, bedding, etc., for the House of Charity. The pensioners, especially Ambrose the devout, received the baskets with humble thanks and profuse

blessings, and passed them along the halls to be set out duly by a novice, two postulants and nine old women on the refectory tables. To keep the novice, two postulants and nine old women in order, a sister sat making paper-flowers in a corner, but she neither spoke nor looked up.

This Franciscan "House of Charity" was a show-case on a grand scale. From attic to cellar, from arched front gateway to high back wall, from sacristy to nursery, it was gotten up for the reception and delectation of curious visitors. The front door and the front gate were kept locked, but otherwise there was an air of freedom from restraint, an apparent candor and openness that was on the outside very refreshing. Having seen that this peculiar air and appearance were in full freshness, Saint Maria Felix summoned Saint Pauline Anna from her cell to accompany her to Gabrielle street; not that she was in need of companionship but because it was the rule of the house for the nuns to go out in twos, never singly, except by special permission, which had been granted to Sister Maria for the evening before.

Had these been two ordinary women walking together to the house of death, the deceased a sister to one of them, there would have been between them a subdued flow of conversation, dwelling on the early *life, characteristics* and last illness of the departed.

There would have been a tender mourning and regretting from one, a respectful sympathizing from the other. But there was nothing of this between these "sisters." They moved on in perfect silence. Never having studied the Bible, they had never learned the Christian rule, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and *so* fulfill the law of Christ." Sister Pauline Anna had no idea of bearing Sister Maria Felix' burden, why should she? These sisters knew very well that the Church ordained them to "run in couples" that one might be a watch and a restraint upon the other, and this knowledge did not tend to mutual confidence. Besides, there was a little matter of five hundred dollars between them, which Saint Pauline at least could not forget. Sister Maria Felix had brought a dowry of two thousand dollars to the altar, when she became the bride of Heaven, and Sister Pauline under the same circumstances brought but fifteen hundred; therefore Sister Pauline thought the other was preferred before her.

Gabrielle street did not appear particularly jubilant on Christmas-day. The narrow walks had been shoveled out in a slovenly fashion; piles of snow lay in nooks and corners and hung over doorways, as just ready to drop on any intruder's head; the milk-wagon had ploughed one track down the middle of the street; a dog on the step of the lock and key

depôt whined for its breakfast, and a cat scratched on the laundry window.

As the two nuns went up stairs in the house Sister Maria had left near midnight, a door on the second floor opened and a woman came curtseying out. "The key's here, and the boy's asleep on me lounge. I gave him his breakfast, poor lad, and I lighted a small fire up above, but not much."

The nuns took the key and went up the next stairway. Sister Pauline's first movement was to help herself to a chair by the fire. Sister Maria Felix looked at the body and sighed. She then opened a trunk and a chest of drawers and seemed to make an inventory of their contents. She opened the cupboard and peered in, then looked out of the window and saw Father Arnholm coming down the street.

Father Arnholm soon entered stamping and shivering, took the chair Sister Pauline vacated for him, threw what fuel was in the box on the fire, and vouchsafed to ask where the boy was. The boy was down stairs, and it was not thought worth while to bring him up to listen while his future was decided. It was speedily ordained that he was to be taken to the House of Charity, and there fashioned into whatever should be seen fit. The funeral was to be the next morning at the church of the Madonna, where *the dead woman had* worshiped for sixteen years.

There would be a hearse and three carriages—Father Arnholm and Philip in one, Saints Maria and Pauline in the next, and whatever neighbors chose to go in the third.

Sister Maria Felix then took from the trunk a little moleskin bag, and counted out twenty dollars in gold into Father Arnholm's hand. This had been saved by much pinching, overwork and underfeeding by the dead devotee, to pay for masses for her soul. Father Arnholm took the gold in one hand and rattled it down slowly into the other, his head, always a little on one side, bent lower yet to listen to the music of the clinking coin.

Then he rose and walked about the room, kicked his heel into the old carpet to discover its thinness, pinched the table-cover to decide its quality, shook a chair by its back, jarred the chest of drawers, looked into closet and trunk, and having finished his examination, told Sister Maria he would send a second-hand dealer there, and she was to let everything go at such a price, which he concluded would bury the dead and set up her gravestone; the clock and a few ornaments on the mantle were relics of better days, and of some worth, and in the closet were a dozen of thin silver spoons; the priest charged Sister Maria to take no less than he named, and went away.

The *two nuns then* began to read certain prayers

for the dead, and continued reading until interrupted by the dealer in second-hand goods. It was curious to see how exactly he examined the articles to be sold as the priest had done, so that one would wonder whether the dealer had taken lessons of the priest, or the priest of the dealer, or whether it is a way natural to some high order of the mercantile genius.

So nearly did the minds of these two great men run in one channel that the dealer's first offer was only two dollars less than the priest had named. Sister Maria Felix now laid down her prayer-book, rose up and made him in soft monotone an oration calculated to raise his terms, by arguments based on the value of clock and mantle ornaments.

He rose one dollar.

Sister Pauline Anna now laid down her prayer-book, rose and in soft monotone made another address calculated to raise the offer of the dealer still higher by subtile deductions drawn from the value of silver spoons.

He rose one dollar more, attaining the level of Father Arnholm. The sisters sat down satisfied—and referred him to the father for the conclusion of the business. Then they fell to reading prayers again: but Sister Pauline thought of the festival-dinner in the refectory, and began to grow hungry, *her appetite being* no whit lessened by the reflection

that said dinner consisted largely of Protestant turkeys, Protestant tarts, and Protestant plumcake, which Protestants had sent in as tokens of their high appreciation of the notable excellence of the House of Charity.

Down stairs the woman who had taken in Philip was watching the cooking of her Christmas dinner, meanwhile conversing with a widowed neighbor, like herself a Romanist, whom she had invited to share it.

"When will the funeral be?" asked the widow.

"To-morrow, most like—that's the third day. I wish his Reverence had had it sooner; but the soul must be in purgatory that long before masses begin."

As the woman said this a stifled sobbing came from the lounge where Philip Lester lay.

"What is the matter, me boy?" said the woman.

"Is *my mother*, my poor sweet mother, in purgatory?" cried Philip, lifting a white terrified face from the pillow, and striving in boyish pride to hush his sobs. "Say, is she burning in that awful place all this while—when she was so good—and so kind—and had so much trouble?"

The words came in short, quick gasps. "Oh, mother! mother! you mustn't be there—take her out, take her out!"—his voice rising to a wild cry in his terror.

"*Whist now, boy,*" said the widow; "don't take

on so; she'll be out one of these days if there's masses said enough, and sure there *will* be. It's bad, to be sure, dreaming of our friends in purgatory—I mind how I felt it when me man died—but it is what we've all got to come to, and after the fires there's the glory—if nothing fails in the getting out—and sure there won't this time—she was a good Catholic, peace be with her—and isn't your aunt a nun?"

"Oh, but she musn't be there, no, not now—how can I live with my mother burning in purgatory? she cried, when I burnt my finger, and I can't let her stay there!"

"Bad luck to our tongues! the boy'll go crazy," muttered the woman.

"Come, lad," said the widow, "to talk against purgatory, and say she sha'n't stay there, is to set yourself against the holy Church, and that will never do. It's for our good like many another thing that ain't pleasant. Say your prayers and that will help her out sooner than talking."

"Will it? will saying my rosary help her?"

"Be sure it will, here it is fast to your neck," said the widow, loosing the beads.

"Leave them a bit, and come to dinner, it is just ready," said the hostess.

"I can't eat while my mother's there—oh, why *don't the* Virgin take her out? I'll say my rosary

over here by the window. Go on and eat. I can't—Oh, mother, mother."

A little girl here came in to borrow a bit of tea. "What are you doing?" she asked Philip.

"Praying," said Philip; "each bead is a prayer."

"To Jesus?" asked the child.

"No, to our lady. See here; there are fifteen 'Meditations,' and for each one we say one 'Our Father,' ten 'Hail Marys,' and one 'Gloria'—in all, fifteen 'Our Fathers' and one hundred and fifty 'Hail Marys.' I don't say but five 'Our Fathers' and fifty 'Hail Marys' generally, but now my mother is dead—and—and—and—" and Philip was sobbing again.

"Don't cry, she's gone to God in heaven," said the girl.

"No, no, she isn't—she's burning—oh, oh, mother!"

The widow put the paper of tea in the girl's hand and gently pushed her from the room.

"Poor child, she's a Protestant, poor little heathen, she don't know anything—praying to Jesus! and going to heaven! poor little sinner!" So murmured the good neighbor, as she cut her Christmas pie.

Doleful Christmas-day, mournful anniversary for Philip of *His birth who came* to save sinners. Then

first was it brought home to the boy that souls are *not* saved by their Saviour's death, but left to burn in fire, until the Church be slowly prevailed upon to let them go to the mansions he founded in his blood.

Agonizing in heart for his mother's suffering soul, Philip Lester said his rosary over and over. The nuns had gone, the dinner was finished; over 'Hail Marys' still he mumbled on, until fasting, weariness and sorrow sharp and new overcame him quite, and he fell fainting on the floor rosary in hand.

The funeral was next day.

Philip had been at funerals before, but how much more solemn, tender and touching was this one. The life where his life had been kindled, the heart whose pulses had been shared with his, the hands that had tended, the eyes that had smiled, the feet that had never grown weary in his service, the lips whose every syllable had been a benediction—all more precious in this extreme hour of parting—were being buried from his sight for ever. To the mournful wailing of the Litany for the dead, to the cry "Be merciful, spare them, hear them: From evil, from thy wrath, from flame of fire, from region and shadow of death, O Lord, deliver them,"—his quivering heart gave answer; and with stiff dry lips he strove to murmur the adjuration to twenty-two saints and orders—as Martyrs, Bishops

and Confessors—to supplement what was lacking to the mighty power of God.

The requiem mass was said, and the opened grave received the coffined sleeper to a mornless rest. The rattling clods of frozen earth fell upon the narrow bed, and seemed to fall also on Philip's chill heart. With the first of those ominous sounds a shiver ran through Sister Maria Felix's frame. She drew her black veil closer, and, when the grave was filled, took her nephew's hand and slowly turned away.

At this same hour in the small but wealthy town of Northville, lying some one hundred and twenty miles away, they were laying the rich man of the village, Henry Courcy, in a new vault. The townspeople, in a long train of carriages, followed him to his burial whispering in decent undertone that "his property was an unincumbered half-million at least, well invested, all to go at last to his daughter—what a pity—only one heir for a property that might have given good fortunes to half a dozen children!"

CHAPTER II.

SISTERS' SCHOOLS VERSUS COMMON SCHOOLS.

WHEN Saint Maria Felix, returning from the funeral of her sister, brought her nephew to the House of Charity, she committed him to Ambrose the devout, to be shown all the wonders of the place. She desired to divert the boy's mind from its morbid musings on purgatory, to make him feel at home in the new dwelling; and as the house was to Maria the sum of all perfection, and was made wholly to be seen, she desired him to see and admire.

As they passed from room to room, Ambrose said so many prayers, knelt so many times, and addressed himself so frequently to the holy water, that Philip was suitably impressed with his piety, and ventured to question him on the subject that was pressing so heavily on his mind.

"Ambrose, how long do you think my mother will have to stay in purgatory?"

"Was she a good Catholic?"

"Oh, yes, indeed!"

"And was there any money for masses?"

"Oh, a whole pile of gold."

'She'll get out pretty soon then, likely. Say your prayers and don't fret over it. All good Christians have to go there, and I suppose it isn't so bad when one's used to it."

Philip shuddered. "The picture of it, Ambrose, is so horrible—people twisting and stretching out their hands from such great red flames."

"Most likely those souls in the picture were heretics, not Catholics."

"But it is said under it pray for the souls burning in purgatory, and are we to pray for heretics?"

"No, indeed; let 'em burn, it's their own fault. Most likely your mother's out now, or will be to-morrow. Come, I'll show you the chapel. I don't believe there is another like it in the country."

As Ambrose spoke he opened the chapel-door. The great altar-piece faced them, and at first in its beauty seemed to fill the room with itself, as sunlight. Ambrose at once knelt, pressing Philip down with him. Philip had been often brought to this house to visit his aunt when he was a young child; but of late years these visits had ceased, and he had no recollection of this chapel. As he repeated a Hail Mary, he kept his eyes fixed on the picture. It was the first great painting he had ever seen. It represented Mary with the serpent beneath her feet, her face uplifted, and angels *gathered about her* in lowly adoration.

Ambrose rose and went half way down the aisle; then knelt again. Philip still gazing bowed readily. He was in a trance of admiration. When they reached the steps of the altar and knelt for the third time, the boy was carried away in an ecstasy of sensuous worship. Ambrose was going through an old form and praying thinking of what impression he made; but Philip, lost to all thought of self, prayed to the picture with a passionate yearning over its wonderful loveliness. To him it opened all heaven. It woke a new taste. Here was a Mary which he could adore waking with tireless ardor, which could fill his sleeping fancies. Heaven and Deity, things so far away and intangible that they were for ever slipping from him, lost in wonderings and questionings, were now realities. Mary was heaven, Mary was divinity. Whatever else he lost, or failed to understand, here was an object for his thoughts, a shrine for all his devotion.

It was some time before Ambrose could turn the boy's attention to anything but the altar-piece. At last he drew him toward a recess divided from the chapel by a low railing, and furnished with benches. Against the wall of this recess was a sort of stall, on the closed door of which in gilt letters was the name of Father Arnholm; and the stall was flanked by two little doorless cells, with a stool for kneeling, and

a square of lattice-work supposed to be at the ear of the reverend occupant of the stall. This was the confessional, and it was arched by a black semicircle bearing the words "Whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted," written in English and in Latin.

Directly opposite this recess was another of equal size, devoted to the shrine of Mary. At the little gate in the railing was a box, having on its lid the words "Give to Mary of seven sorrows." Philip felt as if he would be willing to coin himself body and soul and be presented here as an offering, and thus the boy was carried away in a passion of mariolatry. This shrine was a singular piece of workmanship, a triumph of baptized paganism. Fragments of rocks partly covered with lichens were piled up to represent Calvary; the rocks were surmounted with a cross; a full-sized image of Mary in colored statuary, sat at the foot of the cross, holding her dead Son in her lap, and below her feet knelt twin cherubs, pointing to the inscription on the wall overhead, "Behold thy mother!" Thus the dying words of that matchless Son and Saviour to the beloved disciple were perverted to apply to every person approaching the shrine.

This statuary jarred on Philip's excited feelings. Like all colored sculpture, it was ghastly rather than lovely; and from the haggard and painted face at

the foot of the cross, Philip turned to the exultant, enraptured countenance over the altar. There was the Mary for him!

That night, when Philip with the rest of the boys of the orphan school was laid down in the dormitory set apart for them, Ambrose having a bed near the door, Philip thought more of the picture of the Queen of heaven, and less of the doubts that hung over his mother's present happiness and safety.

Joshua Huntington has blessed Romish literature with a book entitled a "Life Journey from New England Congregationalism, to the One Catholic Apostolic Church;" and Philip lay sleeping in the dormitory of the House of Charity, because his grandmother had made such a journey, and had taken her descendants along with her. This grandmother had died just about the time her journey between these two diverse creeds was completed. She was a feeble woman and the exertion of the change had probably proved over-fatiguing. She left two daughters whom she had seen baptized and confirmed; gave orders for them to go to the convent of the Franciscan Sisters as pupils, and also wished them to become nuns. If but one fulfilled her wish, that one was to have the little fortune of two thousand dollars to bring as her offering to the church. The girls were fifteen *and seventeen years* of age when they entered the

convent, not too early for the elder to have already had a little romance of her own. Before her mother's death, she had learned to prefer a young clerk named Frederick Lester to a life in a nunnery. It thus fell out that after two years the younger sister, taking vows and the money, went to the convent, and Charlotte the elder brought her mother's little household property as her sole dowry to Frederick Lester.

At first there had been success, money, servants and an easy life. Charlotte Lester venerated her consecrated sister, but did not regret her own choice. After success came loss, discouragement, sickness and widowhood. Charlotte took refuge in Gabrielle street, and lived by the labor of her hands. She grew morbid, life looked dark, and with her veneration for Sister Maria Felix was mixed a little envy at her more tranquil lot. Priests harassed her by representing her sorrows as God's vengeance on her for refusing her vocation. She remembered her husband, she looked upon her boy, and could not wish the past undone, yet her heart was burdened with doubt, she was melancholy, painfully rigid in all religious observances, a loving, over-anxious mother. Her life had been she thought a failure—and it was a failure inasmuch as she had not been allowed honestly to choose and bravely to follow her aims, but had *been kept for ever* uncertain and half regretful—

and at last, worn out with the uncomforted strife, she died.

Could such a history be envied? We say not; but Sister Maria Felix, wearying secretly of the yearly sameness of the cloister, having nothing to love and nothing to hope for, looked at her sister's child and sometimes wished she had made her sister's choice. She never framed the wish so plainly that it was brought with her other sins to the confessional; but when it came she put it away as quickly as possible, and lest it should get a dwelling and a name in her heart, she saw even less of her sister than she need have done, and held back any outward tokens of affection from her and from the boy. All this was over now. The scattered fragments of that household-life which had existed before the "Journey" began were now gathered in the "House of Charity"—just Philip and Sister Maria Felix.

There was a schoolroom for the orphans, Sister Pauline Anna was the teacher, and Philip was numbered among her pupils. It took him the time between Christmas and New Year's day, to learn that in Pauline Anna's domain whispering was not objected to, making pictures and playing puzzle on slates was up to the ordinary tone of schoolroom etiquette, and scuffling with feet was the general rule. The classes extended clear across the room, and with

heads thrust in all positions, arms, shoulders and feet exhibited at the will of their owners, presented the elegant regularity of a stump fence. "Don't know" was an answer indifferently received by the teacher; and giving back books, getting lessons over, and being kept after hours, the order of every day.

New Year's Day was a holiday, a day when many visitors were expected, and when everything was displayed at the best advantage. Ambrose had a clean collar, his book opened at a well-thumbed page, a new pair of slippers on his feet, and his countenance admirably touched with humility and gratitude. Philip, having nothing to do, followed Ambrose about for the sake of seeing the visitors he piloted through the building, and of hearing the remarks he made. During the day he was enlightened by Ambrose in the following fashion.

"I suppose," said a lady visitor, glancing down a long ward and seeing here a shrine and there a saint's picture, "that all your patients are Roman Catholics?"

"The sisters are very liberal—the institution is devoted to charity," said Ambrose, dipping his finger in a little china dish of holy water, "and if a person is poor and sick, that is all they ask—they take them in without question of religion."

"But once in, they are expected to conform to your observances?"

"If any one desires to see a Protestant clergyman she is at liberty to do it, he will be sent for," said Ambrose, making the sign of the cross.

"Did you ever know one to come here; did you ever know a Protestant clergyman to be sent for?" persisted the lady.

"I'm a humble son of the holy Church," said Ambrose, his eyes seeking his prayer-book, "and to do my duty and repent of my own sins is all that I find time for, without attending to the faults of the other pensioners."

"Then you cannot mention any clergyman that you have seen here?"

"I see my own priest—if the lady desires to know further, she can ask a Protestant patient."

"Will you point me out one?"

"I do not know them—they are taken in, and I do not ask of their belief—I wait on all as I am bid."

"That man in this bed for instance?"

"Madam can ask."

Madam did ask and found him a Catholic.

The next was a German, who could not speak English.

The third was deaf. Madam ceased asking.

"What is the tuition in the school?"

"Madam," said Ambrose, in a deprecatory tone,

"there is no tuition—the holy sisterhood works not for money, but for love of charity—our children are all orphans gathered into the bosom of the Church."

At the door of a great room, in which many old women pensioners were working, and at different tables sisters were cutting, basting and dealing out work, Ambrose stopped. "No one is idle; all work; that old woman pensioner who can do nothing but spin—you see her yonder—last year she made a hundred pounds of yarn."

"And does this work support the institution?"

Ambrose shook his head, "So great charity costs much; the subscription paper of the house is at Fitch's music store; visitors give money in our boxes; we have many presents; but what is all that? See what the holy sisters give—themselves, and all they have." Saint Maria Felix passed the door, and Ambrose added, "There is a holy sister who gave all her fortune to the Church."

A gentleman visitor after such remarks as these laid his hand on Ambrose's shoulder, and said, "It seems to me, you are a big strong fellow to be here as a pensioner;. you are hardly sixty yet?"

"I came here very ill," said Ambrose.

"But you are bravely over it; why burden these charities any longer?"

"*I am giving myself* to prayer and penitence for

the sins of my youth," said Ambrose, interrupting his reply to bow and whisper a prayer at a shrine. "I shall spend my old age serving the Church; prayer and penance are the duties of old men."

"Here," continued Ambrose, "is the sacristy. This is the convent library," and he pointed to some hundred dingy volumes ranged on a small set of swinging shelves in one corner. In the sacristy were a high stool, a locked desk, a cylinder stove, and a cloudy smoky picture of the Immaculate Conception, before which Ambrose stood praying while the guest turned over the books. As Ambrose prayed, Philip, standing in the door, saw that one eye twisted into the corner of its lid in a remarkable manner and watched the visitor at the library.

"That is our charity-box," said Ambrose with a little groan. He need not have thus introduced it, for "Give to our poor!" was over it in large letters; however, when it was thus brought to his notice the gentleman twisted up a bank-note and dropped it in the hole in the lid. Again Philip detected the watching eye, and a thought shot through his brain, that, if Ambrose had a sufficiency of such notes, he would return with avidity to the so-frequently-mentioned "sins of his youth."

Ambrose threw open the door of a closet-like room, which was filled with paper flowers, tall bouquets in

pots, great imitation rose-bushes, small bunches in vases, wreaths and single sprays in profusion. "The work of the sisterhood," said Ambrose. "They make them for sale; they are bought for shrines and churches, and the money goes to the poor."

We wonder if one of the poor that the money went to was Father Arnholm. The visitor going out of the arched gateway almost ran over this reverend father, pacing up and down the walk reading his missal in the keen January air—it was one of Father Arnholm's ways of advertising his office.

Monday morning Philip was in the schoolroom. Devotions occupied an hour, and catechism an hour.

"Arithmetic class!" said Sister Pauline Anna.

A long line of scholars twisted and wriggled themselves into place, and a motion communicated at one end of the line by a kindly exchange of pin-pricks extended in a sudden jerk, giggle and eager look through the entire length.

"Tables!" cried Sister Pauline—"six times one!"

A voice began at each end of the class.

"Six times one is six—I'm 'head!" said Maggie McGuire, a red-pated damsel.

"You ain't," cried Pat Maloney—his black locks standing erect as in indignation at the daring assumption of Maggie—"I'm 'head."

"Sister Pauline, I was 'head yesterday," said Maggie.

"Well, then let Pat be 'head to-day," said Sister Pauline, tranquilly looking up from her tatting shuttle.

"Six times six!"

"That ain't fair!" cried Maggie.

"Be quiet, Maggie, or you will have to do a penance in the chapel."

Maggie put her finger in her mouth, and turned her face to the wall, inconsolable. Pat recited "sixes," Sister Pauline taking up the book to follow him after the first three. At this Philip winked at his neighbor, and his neighbor, not seeing the point, dropped a fragment of slate-pencil down Philip's back to increase the jollity of the occasion. When the table of six had been repeated by twenty pupils, Maggie was reached.

"Sixes, Maggie," said Saint Pauline.

"I ain't reciting," said Maggie.

"Class dismissed. Maggie, go stand by the pillar in the middle of the room with a book on your head."

"Reading class!" and one after another three classes blundered through their reading.

This week there were frequent passages at arms between Sister Pauline and Philip.

"Philip, you are not studying."

"Nothing to study."

"Your tables."

"Knew 'em two years ago."

"The reading lesson."

"Read in higher books last year."

"How much is nine times nine?"

"Eighty-one."

"Nine times twelve?"

"One hundred and eight."

"Yes," said Sister Pauline, after a little meditation.

"Why can't I study grammar and philosophy? I have studied them," said Philip, plaintively.

"You mustn't set yourself above the other pupils," said Sister Pauline. "This is an orphan school, and you must learn what orphans ought."

"Why oughtn't they to learn as much as other folks?"

"You are a wicked boy to ask such questions. You must go do a penance."

"What penance?"

"Go say nine 'Hail Marys' in the chapel."

"Oh, good," said Philip. "I wish you'd keep me at that all the time."

That evening Sister Pauline presented herself before the superior, whose name was Mother Denny. Having done reverence on her knees, and been per-

mitted to rise, she said she could not do anything in school with Philip Lester. "He knows enough and too much already."

"He is not very old."

"Only twelve—but he wants to study grammar and philosophy."

"How comes it that he has got to such a pass as that?" queried the superior, as if discussing some early and astonishing development of natural depravity.

"He has been allowed to run about to all sorts of schools," said Sister Pauline. "If his mother had been a good Catholic, or had had pious relatives to do their duty by her, she would have kept him at sisters' schools." Here was a side thrust at Sister Maria.

"And he has learned all that we teach in our schools?"

"So he says; and he knows all his lessons without studying, which is very troublesome, and a bad example to the other children. It might be well to apprentice him to a shoemaker. He has a wonderful faculty for wearing out his shoes, and kicks his toes into the walks without reflecting that he is an orphan brought up by charity."

Here was another hit at Saint Maria Felix, whose secret hopes Saint Pauline had shrewdly guessed.

"I will lay the matter before Father Arnholm," said the superior. "To-morrow you can give him the catechism for mass, and make him learn it between recitations."

Pursuant to this recommendation, Philip was next day relieved for a time of the duty of shooting his neighbors with paper balls and the like.

"Spelling class," called Sister Pauline, and all her older pupils sprang to the middle of the room, shouldering and elbowing stoutly for places.

"Children, be quiet!" said Sister Pauline, who had her book open in her lap, and was hemming ruffles.

The children were not quiet, but continued striking with the shoulder so briskly, that Victor Valse upset Biddy Morgan.

Here the gentle saint's patience was exhausted, as there was ample reason it should be, and she straightened Victor by his ear, led Maggie to her place by a lock of her red hair, and cuffed Pat Maloney with the spelling-book. Order thus achieved, she put forth the word "Believe."

"B e, be, l e v e!" said Maggie.

"That's wrong! B e, be, l e i v e," cried Victor.

"B e l e v," chimed Biddy; and while both Victor and Biddy rushed prematurely after Maggie's place, Philip's voice rose over the din, "B e l i e v e!"

"He's *right!*" *cried Pat Maloney*, who had peeped

into his book. "Come out of there!" and he grasped Victor's coat-tail to make him give way to Philip.

"Order!" said Sister Pauline. "Philip, go to your seat, you spelled out of your turn."

"He ought to go 'head; he spelled right," said Pat.

"He did not study his lesson; if he had been to decent schools he would have had to study this morning; he cannot go 'head for knowing without study. Victor may stay 'head for he is nearest right. Now, Victor, spell believe, and put your i before the e."

"I want Philip to spell if I have to," said Pat Maloney. He wanted Philip because Philip benevolently prompted him.

"Patrick, you must do a penance for rebellion and impertinence. Go now."

"Give me a long one so I needn't come back to spelling class."

"You must go kiss the floor three times, and say 'O my good angel,' and so on, each time."

Pat made a wry face, but went as ordered, knelt with his back to the sister, put his knees close together, and, thus sheltered, laid a fragment of paper on the floor to receive his kisses. The disengaged pupils saw this and laughed in chorus.

There are strong efforts making now in various cities in the United States to divert part of the common school fund to the exclusive use of Roman

Catholics, and these have in a measure succeeded. There is also a strong effort to put the Roman Catholics in possession of the public schools, by appointing Catholic Directors and Committeemen, therefore catholic teachers. We would suggest to American citizens what an admirable thing it will be to see all our schoolrooms supplied with such judicious teachers as Sister Pauline; what an advantage to our children to receive such discipline, drill, and education as this; what wisdom, to divert a large portion of the public school fund to the support of just such schools as this in the House of Charity, where children may be educated away from all possibility of being intelligent citizens and wisely discriminating voters. How is the future good of this Republic regarded and the interest of its sons conserved when the school taxes are used for destroying instead of upbuilding good schools! when bad schools are nourished at the expense of better! when Protestant ministers and church members pay taxes into the pockets of priests and sisters! and when the children of these ministers and church members are calmly handed over by "the public" to nuns for instruction! As Uzzah fell under the destroying bolt of heaven when he laid his hand profanely on the Ark of God, so ought every hand to wither, and every brain to reel, that *desecrates the* sacred Ark of our liberties,

the mind-fostering, God-fearing, and Bible-reading school system of the United States of America.

A postulant in a white cap entered the schoolroom, knelt hastily to Saint Pauline according to rule, and gave the superior's order that Philip Lester should come to her. The postulants hated this kneeling to Sister Pauline, as she always regarded them with a grim triumph. Sister Maria Felix on the contrary gave them a gentle approbative glance, which almost recompensed them for the humiliation.

In Mother Denny's room was Father Arnholm. Philip bowed low to both the priest and the superior, with an ease and refinement in which his mother had carefully trained him, and which at once pleased the two people before whom he now stood.

"Philip," said Father Arnholm, "why is it that you have got so far beyond Sister Pauline's school?"

"Because, reverend Father, I have been to better schools," said Philip with innocent frankness.

"Have you not been to our parochial schools?"

"Sometimes, father."

"And why not always?"

"Because I got tired of bothering always over the same thing, and I wanted to get ahead faster, and go farther than those schools take a fellow."

"That was unfortunate, son Philip."

"Why don't those schools teach more like the

other ones? I know a good many boys who leave them just because they want to learn more."

"They must be satisfied with what the Church teaches. I have forbidden the children of my parish to go any more to schools which are only dens of devils. This morning," added Father Arnholm, "I went into one of the public schools, when they were having what they call 'worship,' and bade the Catholics rise from their seats and cast their vile Testaments on the floor."

"And they obeyed you surely," said Mother Denny.

"Obeyed! they trembled at my look!" cried the priest, his voice rising in anger, "had they dared do otherwise, I would have sunk them all in perdition."

"Those wicked schools!" said Mother Denny, between her teeth.

"They are fish for our net," said the priest, "we are setting our seine properly, and by and by we shall drag them all in, and then let the fool Protestants grind their teeth."

As he spoke, the priestly German's mouth widened a little toward his ears, and his eyes rolled up to a corner of the ceiling — that was his way of laughing.

Had he *any right to laugh*?

Witness—One hundred and sixty-eight thousand dollars given to the Papal College at Rome.*

Witness—The appropriations from the school fund for Papal Hospital and Asylum schools.

Witness—A public school with every teacher a Romanist.†

"And now, Philip, what is to be done with you? Have you learned the mass catechism set you to-day?" said Father Arnholm.

Philip pulled the little book from his pocket, handed it to the priest, and began rattling over question and answer at a lively rate.

"So much learned to-day, Philip?"

"I like to learn."

"And Sister Pauline says you like penances."

"When they are prayers to our lady in the chapel. Oh, how I love our lady's picture—she has heaven in her face—I could look all day!"

"Good boy, you are no heretic," said Father Arnholm.

"A heretic!" Philip's lip curled. To him a heretic was all that was mean and contemptible. He had

* (*a*) See Appendix of "Priest and Nun," p. 523. (*b*) See circular published at Bible-House, N. Y., by the "League."

† For such instances notice the schools of Shakopee, Wis. (see Pres. Monthly), one also in Illinois, another in New York, and indeed the list might be greatly increased.

heard the priest utter the word as a term of the greatest reproach, and he did not consider that the wisest and most powerful people about him were heretics. Heresy was what he had been educated to loathe. To be a Romanist was a sort of title of nobility to the most debased; but heresy would drag an archangel from the heavenly heights.

Father Arnholm marked the flashing eye and the curling lip. Here was a boy of ardent feeling and good ability. Mind as well as money is what Rome wants. The boy might become — what is rare—an able and thoroughly in earnest priest. Then the remembrance that the boy could not become a man in a moment, and what choke-damp of example and training he must pass through to reach the priesthood—it was not likely that he would reach it loving, ardent and faithful—changed the current of Father Arnholm's thoughts.

"We must find something for you to do, since you are too wise for our school," said Father Arnholm.

"I wish I might learn Latin," said Philip.

"That would make a bad matter worse, as you would only be wiser still. We must try and apprentice you. Meanwhile you need not go to school, but you may wait on the reverend mother here, dust the chapel, and read what you can find in the sacristy."

Saint Pauline was both glad to be rid of Philip,

and angry that Saint Maria Felix had a nephew too wise for her to teach.

"A priest does she want him to be!" said Saint Pauline, "she is very fond of priests! We shall see how she turns out; she was no true Catholic when she was a postulant—I remember she ate bread and jelly on fast day, and stole cream out of the pantry; and she has allowed this boy to go with heretics;—I hope she is not watching for your shoes, mother."

Mother Denny smiled. She knew Saint Pauline's disposition; but Saint Pauline was in some things as Mother Denny's right hand; she was the general spy and tale-bearer of the institution; she noticed if any sister slipped a bit of bread in her pocket at meals, if any one broke the vow of poverty by confiscating a stray needle or pin, if any sister's book was upside down at prayers, or if any one stayed longer than the rest at confession. These were things not beneath Mother Denny's notice.

"Armed with a little brief authority," Mother Denny was puffed up with vain glory over her position as local superior. She was monarch of all she surveyed, except when Father Arnholm or Mother Elizabeth Vallé, the superior of the convent of "Our Lady of Seven Sorrows," of which the "House of Charity" was a branch institution, loomed up in the *horizon; and* she held herself right despotically in

her little kingdom, exacting honor where it was due and where it was not due, and ruling with a rod of iron, tyrannizing over those under her as cowards will.

Sister Josepha had just come to the House of Charity, and unfortunately her face was prettier than the others'. This led Mother Denny to see that in distributing new aprons, Sister Josepha had kept the finest. Sister Josepha humbly thought they were all alike. Mother Denny was sure Josepha's apron was the best, and Josepha's pride was punished by forcing her to lay aside the new alpaca apron and put on a check one from the kitchen. Josepha wept. Tears were rebellion, and Josepha was condemned to whitewash the kitchen.

The work was new and hard—Josepha was small and delicate—the wash fell into her eyes, and over her clothes—her hands trembled, her back ached. Sister Maria Felix passed by, looking kind.

"I must throw down this brush and say I can't do it," said poor little Josepha.

"Remember your vow of obedience, and do your best."

Thus counselled Saint Maria Felix, and Pauline (unaccountably within sight) reported the two as conversing.

"What was she saying to you?" questioned Mother Denny *of Saint Maria.*

"Scarcely anything, mother," evaded the nun.

"I command you to tell exactly her words."

Thus adjured, Sister Maria reported Josepha's remarks.

It was February, but Josepha was ordered to walk barefoot for three days.

We commend these incidents to the consideration of romantic girls, who become weary of home and of helping their mothers, and "think they will go to a convent and be a nun."

Philip eagerly availed himself of the permission to read in the sacristy, and mounted on the high stool he read all the books on the little shelves, some of them several times over. He was reading there one evening—poring over "Mater Admirabilis, or the first fifteen years of Mary the Immaculate"—under the light of a little swinging lamp, when Ambrose pulled his arm, saying, "You must come to the chapel to see the penance—it is a good sight for all humble and devout souls."

"Who is to do a penance?" asked Philip.

"Margaret the pensioner, for eating meat on Friday, three weeks ago. She kept it to herself past two confessions, and never mentioned it until yesterday, which has increased her sin."

"What did she eat meat Friday for?" asked

Philip, accompanying Ambrose to the chapel, where all the household except the sick were gathering.

"She said she was so hungry she could not help it—she was getting over the fever and fast-day came hard to her," Ambrose sneered.

"Poor thing," said Philip, "I dare say she *was* hungry. When I was getting over the fever I had a ferocious appetite. I know just how she felt—as if she'd eat if it killed her."

"Here she comes!" said Ambrose with relish.

Sister Pauline advanced ringing a bell. Old Margaret the pensioner, her hair dishevelled and sprinkled with ashes, weeping, her feet bare, her tall bony frame tottering in her distress, followed Pauline, and behind came a nun with a cross. Old Margaret knelt three times in the aisle and kissed the floor, kissed each of the steps of the altar, and then kneeling said,

"I confess to the holy mother superior, to each of the holy sisterhood, to the holy novices and postulants and to all the pensioners my grievous folly and sin, and humbly entreat forgiveness."

Her voice trembled at the last so she could hardly speak, and with difficulty rising from her knees she was escorted back as she came.

"Poor thing," said Philip, "how weak she is, and see her gray *hair! How I'd* feel if it were my mo-

ther. Poor old creature, do you think her fault was so very great, Ambrose?"

"Of course it was. Do you think I'd eat meat on Friday? No, not if I starved—I hope I know my duty to the holy Church better! Sorry for her—she ought to have twice as much penance!"

Philip shrunk away from Ambrose involuntarily; yet said to himself, "What a very holy man he is." Paul had "nothing of which to glory." Ambrose it seems had much.

CHAPTER III.

HOUSES OF CHARITY.

WE have mentioned the show-cases of work distributed over the House of Charity, also the room of artificial flowers, and the charity-boxes.

These boxes were all kept locked, and the keys were in the hands of Mother Denny. Mother Denny was just as careful of her keys as if she were not living in a family of saints and of pensioners regenerated by baptism in the true Church. Every Saturday night Mother Denny took her keys in one hand and a basket in the other. Philip preceded her with a lamp, and thus attended she made a tour of the house and emptied all the boxes into her basket. Returning to her room, the reverend mother would unlock a strong secretary, count the money, write the amount in her account-book, and finally secure the money in a secret drawer with a curious spring lock.

Weekly, the charity-boxes yielded a respectable addition to the finances of the house. And besides, many larger gifts were received, such as were borne in on *Christmas-day; and the* friends of the pension-

ers and orphans made frequent small donations which in the year swelled to a considerable amount. The work of the pensioners and sisters also netted annually a large sum. The institution was a House of *Charity*, a standing monument of the *benevolence* of Rome, and was supposed to be in some way a great benefactor of poor Protestants; and yet it was in point of fact a source of no small *pecuniary profit* to the Church, and like the maid of Philippi brought much gain to its masters.

When Mother Denny set down on one page of her account-book her weekly income, she set down on another the weekly expenses — there was always a margin in favor of the income.

Protestant charitable institutions are for the most part kindly allowed by their supporters to get into debt, and quarterly lift up the cry "Come over and help us!" But no such getting into debt is tolerated in Romish Houses of Charity. A fundamental principle in their creed is that, "Charity must be made to pay."

"Hold," says somebody—"a large house like this in the business part of a crowded city has an enormous ground-rent to pay—"

Allow me to explain that the ground whereon the House of Charity was built in imperishable granite, was rented to the Institution perpetually, for one dol-

lar a year, and even this dollar was sadly in arrears.*

On Sunday morning after early mass, Father Arnholm went to the superior's room for refreshments. The father was generally entertained with hot coffee, beefsteak, toast, and an egg, brought on a handsome server by a postulant. After the refection was concluded, Mother Denny handed to Father Arnholm the surplus money, and glibly ran over her accounts. She did not levy any black mail on her money surplus, but gave it to Father Arnholm intact; the father was supposed to hand it to his bishop, and so from hand to hand it passed up along the line of ecclesiastical authorities, tapped maybe pretty well *en route*, and yet, with the excess of other charitable (*i. e.* money-making) institutions, what a golden stream did it pour into the pope's pocket.

Look over the membership of the Romish Church, and how few you find who pay income tax, how many even who are not able to support themselves. The rich men as a general thing are in the other churches. And yet the Roman Catholic Church is the richest Church. In what other denomination do

* Lots on Fifty-first street and Lexington avenue, and on Fifty-first and Fifty-second streets, and Fourth and Fifth avenues, New York, have been leased to the Roman Catholics perpetually, at $1 per annum. The first-mentioned has failed to pay its yearly $1.

you find such buildings, such landed property, such a sum as THREE MILLIONS to send out of the country, or six hundred thousand gold dollars to scatter about in proselyting?*

Think of this when the subscription paper of the House of Charity is laid before you.

Think of this when the pretty little sister humbly invites you to put something in the "charity-box."

Think of this when cook, laundress, and chamber-maid with one consent begin to raise their wages fifty cents a month, and you find that all the Catholic damsels at service in the city have done likewise.†

"I question what we are to do with Philip," said Mother Denny to her spiritual director, "the boy is trying to learn Latin."

"What has he got to learn Latin in?"

"Only his prayer-book, and he is trying to pick out something from that."

*Three millions is the moderate tribute of Americans to his Holiness Pope Pius IX. $600,000 (in gold) is the generous distribution of the Romish Propaganda devoted to proselyting in the United States. The Propaganda is just now zealous among the *Freedmen*, we hope Protestants will be equally as zealous among them.

† When the R. C. Cathedral in Trenton, N. J., was being built, the Catholic servants raised their wages fifty cents per month, and devoted that to the building; another way this of making Protestants support Romanism.

"Philip," said the priest, "I think we must apprentice you to a shoemaker."

Philip hung his head and looked sullen.

"Or a baker? or a confectioner?"

"One is as bad as the other," said Philip.

"And suppose we do so apprentice you, and a Protestant comes along and offers to teach you, languages for instance, and those sources of heresy, Greek and Hebrew, would you learn?"

"I would learn," said Philip, "but I would not be a heretic."

"And the heretic would lend you his books and you would read them?"

"If I had no others, for I must read something, but I would never believe their heresy."

"And what must be done to a boy who would learn of heretics and read their books?"

"Let the Church teach me and give me books, and then I will have no temptation," said Philip, shrewdly.

Father Arnholm laughed—"Brother Dominick shall come here and teach you Latin."

After this, Father Arnholm brought Philip a grammar much behind the times, and told him that Brother Dominick would come now and then to hear him recite. "You will get enough of it," he said.

If Philip had ever had better classical advantages than now offered, he would soon have had enough of his musty, inconsistent old grammar and Brother Dominick's blunders, but he was ignorant and his ignorance was bliss.

Peter Robert Olivetan said in the sixteenth century "The priests hate good grammar more than they do bad lives," and we might say so with equal truth in the nineteenth century.

As for Brother Dominick, his life was better than his grammar. He was a monk whose gray hair fringed his tonsured crown; he had a smoothly shaven chin, a pleasant smile, strong white teeth, and kind brown eyes under rugged brows. His gown came to his ankles, and was fastened about his waist with a sash tied behind, in a fashion young ladies much affect at present. He had a round cape over his shoulders, and a square collar standing up about his ears. Philip in his inexperience conceived a high respect for Brother Dominick's learning, and looked upon him, coming to release him from the dungeon of his ignorance, much as Peter must have looked on the angel who laid potent touch on the bars of Herod's prison.

One evening Father Arnholm put on his gloves, brushed his hat and went out to make a call. He entered a stylish house and was courteously welcomed

by a stylish family. They were not of Father Arnholm's flock, but he was none the less at home for that. One of the young ladies was at the piano, and she sang "When the swallows homeward fly" and "Ever of thee I am fondly dreaming"—which Padre Arnholm was doubtless glad to hear. The rest of the family were playing cribbage, and one of the sons resigned his place in Father Arnholm's favor, who took it nothing loath—indeed he had come for a game of cribbage of one kind or another, and probably he thought he might as well get his hand in. It was a pleasant evening, and the Honorable John Smith and his family thought the priest a very pleasant man. When he took his leave, the Honorable John accompanied him from the parlor carefully closing the door. They stood in the hall while the priest got his hat, coat and gloves.

"See here, Smith," said Father Arnholm, easily, "next session you must get me an appropriation of two thousand for the House of Charity, and two thousand for the House of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows."

"Whe-w-w-w, that's coming it pretty strong," said the Honorable John, with a lengthening face.

"Strong or not, I've got to have it," said the unworldly priest, smoothing his glove.

"Well, the *House of Charity* — that's a sort of

hospital, and old people's home and so on—I might get it for that. But Our Lady of Seven Sorrows—"

"Oh, that's a school you know."

"Eh? Didn't know they took pupils there."

"Oh yes they do, very select, and orphans generally. What's the use of haggling, Smith? I must have these two appropiations, and you must get them."

"Well, the newspapers are beginning to prick up their ears over these appropriations going all to one class of institutions. *I'd* just as lief, you know, that you'd have them—"

"Yes, I know," said Father Arnholm, jocularly—"You haven't a very large income, you don't pay very heavy taxes, and you are giving away other people's money—of course you'd just as lief, eh?" and Father Arnholm's mouth widened toward his ears, and his eyes rolled obliquely to the ceiling.

"But you see, there's Brown—he keeps looking out for these little matters, and talks about making differences in favor of Catholic Institutions, and gets up a confounded turmoil all the time."

"I can't help that," said the priest, smoothing his other glove—"I shall not fall a penny—two thousand a piece, or very likely you won't see yourself in the legislature another term." He took down his hat, shaped it, put it on.

"Smith?"

"Oh yes, yes—I'll see to it—I'll do what I can for you—I always have."

"Certainly—much obliged to you—good-night, Smith."

And so John Smith promised the public moneys in spite of the newspapers *auribus erectis*, and Mr. Brown's "turmoil."*

Did this man's wife know how he was betraying the interest of the State?

Pray what had his mother been doing all his early years, that now he was selling the good of his country to secure votes and position?

In our school days, during one of the Presidential campaigns, party spirit ran high, and some embryo politicians canvassed the school for votes—the girls of course not being allowed the privilege of expressing their opinion. In a few days a second vote was taken, and two boys who had been in one party sold their franchise to the other for a cent apiece!

Again the school was polled, and the boys resold themselves at an advance of one penny! Thus the

* Honorable member of the New York Legislature, though I veil your name under the pleasant little fiction of "John Smith," you know who is meant, and casting your eye over the list of appropriations made by that Legislature you recognize the two for which Priest —— bargained with you, and the passage of which you corruptly *secured.*

strife went on during the whole campaign, these two boys being found to be political rolling stock, and keeping first one party and then the other in the ascendant. In the years that have passed we trust these two boys have become honest men. But they were then fourteen years of age, and in those fourteen years what had their mothers been doing that in their hearts the first principles of political probity were wanting?

My sisters, I say nothing to you on the question of your voting; but I do say to you, look to your cradles and the children at your knees. Would you have them honest men, citizens who will not pervert the public funds, sell their votes, and prostitute their influence, begin to-day! Make them patriots, make them Protestants. Do we follow the streams of patriotism and political purity to their source, we shall find them in cradles watched by wise, patriotic and honest-hearted Protestant mothers.

It was Spring, and the bishop began his annual tour through his diocese, for the purpose of laying apostolic hands on the heads of candidates for confirmation. He took with him Father Arnholm and Brother Dominick. In the course of his travels, he came to the town of Northville. He found it rich, *lazy and fashionable*. He considered the situation,

and concluded it was time for the holy Apostolic Church to make a move.

All the townspeople crowded out to hear the bishop preach, and every time the church was full a collection was taken up. Father Arnholm wrote little *morceaux* for the papers stating how the church of the Immaculate Mother was to be architecturally improved, so that it would be an ornament to the town. The bishop was often invited out to dine, and generally came back from these dinings-out with money for the "improvements" in his pocket, given by wise Protestants for the benefit of the town and the honor of eating with a bishop; and that was an honor sure enough, when you take into consideration how Abrahamic was the bishop's air, as he patted the heads of the family juveniles, and how unimpeachably elegant was his manner of handing the lady of the house out to dinner.

Additional money for church-building was to be raised by a fair; and to have a fair some sisters must be imported to the town; and indeed the bishop said it was quite time to buy a house, put a few sisters in it, and have them establish a parochial school, visit the sick, make friends with the townspeople, and keep the true Church well before the public's eye.

Father Arnholm went with the bishop to negotiate for *the purchase of a large* brick house next the

church, and could give four thousand dollars "cash down," for which flourishing state of the holy father's pocket we refer you to the (*dis*)honorable John Smith.

When the house was bought, a corps of devout sons of the Church, of the artisans' rank, were set to work to make it a tabernacle meet for the habitation of the saints.

To hear the bishop hold forth in the Church of the Immaculate Mother, came the widow of Henry Courcy, accompanied by her daughter and her daughter's most intimate friend. The sexton of the church, knowing well his business, gave the lady the best seat as was due her wealth and position. Seated in his episcopal chair of state, the bishop marked the elegant repose and easy self-assurance of Mrs. Courcy, judged correctly of the cost of her garments, appreciated the deference shown her, and privately inquired of the parish priest her name and estate. Very likely the faithful thought he was speaking of some important spiritual matter!

After service Mrs. Courcy was introduced, and herself presented her daughter Magdalen, and the daughter's friend, Viola Hastings. How benignantly the bishop regarded these young maidens!

Mrs. Courcy invited the bishop, Father Arnholm, Brother Dominick, and the parish priest to take dinner with her the next day. They went, and enjoyed

a dinner of five courses and three kinds of wine—a very nice little dinner for a widow in the most inconsolable state of mourning; and besides, the bishop took home a hundred dollar note—a trifle for the building "from one who trusts she is public-spirited," said Mrs. Courcy. Father Arnholm also took home a bright idea; the parish priest, the assurance of Mrs. Courcy's patronage of a fair, and Brother Dominick, the adoration of the two girls, who said he was "such a dear old man"—which we do not deny—and doubtless the bishop knew it when he took him there.

As these reverend guests left Mrs. Courcy's gate, they met a lady who so arrested the bishop's attention that he looked after her, asking the parish priest, "Who is that?"

"Miss Vaughn."

"Rich?"

"Yes—very."

"Many relations?"

"No. She is her own mistress, manages her own property, meddles in stocks, real estate and mortgages, and they say she has as good a business-head as any man in the place."

"I have not seen her in Church."

"No; and she will not be seen there. She is a rabid *Protestant*. *I have* burned up more than forty

Bibles which she has given my people, and as for the tracts one might as well try to gather up the leaves in autumn."

"Such women are very troublesome," said Father Arnholm. And the parish priest replied—

"She is the torment of my life in this place."

"See how excellent is the policy of our Church," said the bishop. "We have no such women. Those of our women, who do not marry and mind their own families, are generally gathered into religious houses, where their restless energy is modified, their ambitious will subdued. If they are permitted to work, it is as the Church directs, and under order of the clergy."

"Vy does you not try and convert *cet jeune damoiselle?*" said Brother Dominick to the parish priest.

"You might as well talk of converting arch fiends such as Luther and Calvin. All the holy Church couldn't do it," said the parish priest.

When the bishop and his satellites returned from Northville, Mother Elizabeth Vallé, Reverend Mother Superior of the convent of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows, and also of the House of Charity, received orders to detail a small force of sisters for the Northville establishment.

Mother Vallé was sixty years old, and had lived *in convents* from her sixth year—you may believe

she had experience in all their departments and emergencies. She had long been a subordinate, never getting any higher than housekeeper, and greatly had her proud spirit pined and chafed over its ungratified ambitions; but she had fretted strictly in secret. She belonged to a Church which more than any other appreciates the strength of *waiting*. She waited year by year, and at last, when gray hairs first began to come at forty years of age, she was sent with five subordinates to establish a new house, the convent of "Our Lady of Seven Sorrows." Here she found free scope for her abilities. Under her rule this convent became rich and prominent. Its resources were large, its cloistered nuns numerous, its chapel and its ornaments beautiful and valuable, and the "House of Charity" stood as its offspring, greater almost than the parent-tree. "Seven Sorrows," was now to strike a new root at Northville, which Mother Vallé trusted should live and flourish, so that she, the patient waiter and steady worker, might be mother of three convents before she died.

When the house at Northville was finished and furnished, it was named—"House of St. Vincent de Paul." There must be a sister for a superior, old enough, wise enough, not so unamiable as to be likely to create trouble. Mother Vallé called the convent-carriage *and was taken*—curtains shut down in the

warm spring day, very much as if she were riding in a hearse—to the House of Charity; told Mother Denny to call Sister Maria Felix, and bade Maria Felix get into her carriage to go next day as superior to Northville.

Sister Maria had nothing to pack up; she had taken a vow of poverty and was poor enough; she put her prayer-book and her examined book in her pocket and stood ready to go.

Mother Vallé wanted a teaching sister. This sister must be amiable and skilled in fancy work, and she had better also be pretty and winning to attract the Northville ladies. Mother Vallé did not need Mother Denny to tell her what material was in the House of Charity, as she kept herself well-informed. She called for Sister Josepha. Poor Josepha came limping. Since she had been forced to go barefoot in winter, she had had inflammatory rheumatism and it had settled in her knee. Her eyes brightened under her downcast lids, when she was ordered to depart with Sister Maria Felix.

Sister Maria Felix thought of Philip. She would have been glad to bid him good-bye, but she belonged to the Church, her business was to obey Mothers Vallé and Denny, and have no private wishes, so she vanished like a dream out of that period of Philip's life. The boy had learned to love her, and he cried

when he found she had left him. He asked Mother Denny "where his aunt had gone?"

"Your aunt belongs to the Church, and she has gone where the Church bids her; you must ask no questions, questions betray a selfish and distrustful spirit."

Philip took refuge in his Latin grammar and the instructions of Brother Dominick, but in spite of all his efforts two tears fell on the page he studied. "Cheer up, mon fils," said Brother Dominick—"carry vatever trouble oppresses you to our lady—ve must make vous a priest some day."

"Will you? Oh do, Brother Dominick, I so hate to be a shoemaker!" cried Philip.

"Be comforted—ve does not make shoemakers of Latin scholars," said Brother Dominick.

Mother Vallé gave Sister Maria Felix her orders, and gave her also a sister for a housekeeper. This sister owed her new position to a natural penchant for tale-bearing, and it was tacitly understood that she was to be Mother Vallé's spy in the new house. Sister Maria Felix was also given a sister who was to nurse the sick, and she had been selected because she had a great talent for gossip, and in her rounds would pick up for her priest's ear most of the Northville news. She would hear of all eligible orphans, of all *Papists with Protestant* inclinings, of all dying

people who might be unexpectedly baptized into the true Church and set down as converts. Lastly, there was sent to Northville a devout and learned sister, a passionate, fervid zealot, who would be known for rites and observances, who knew how to talk of the only true Church, argue after a shallow fashion, and urge and exhort any souls who might be found lingering on the border-land between Romanism and Protestantism.

If any one can indicate to me any new institution more ably planted, and with better prospects of working out its ends, or one more likely to succeed and extend itself than the House of St. Vincent de Paul at Northville, I should be happy to hear of it. Perhaps somebody will be good enough to look into these matters, and see how religious houses are founded, and how rapidly they grow, and how widely they spread, and then will that somebody be able to draw from these observations the prevalent idea that "Romanism is not increasing," "Romanism is dying out?"

Our five nuns had gone to Northville and taken possession of their house. Their arrival was duly noticed in the daily paper. Their house had a pretty little parlor, and there Sister Josepha's most elaborate work was displayed. Wax flowers and fruits that might vie with nature's fairest specimens were Jose-

pha's handiwork. So also paper flowers, such as were made at the House of Charity. Josepha's knitting, crocheting, and silk and muslin embroidery were marvellous — she had invented several new stitches and patterns—her tufted work in worsteds won universal approbation; and her pretty young face and soft voice "took" wonderfully with the Northville ladies. The house was for the first year or two to be open to visitors, it was best to make the Northville people feel at home in it.

Mrs. Courcy called soon after the sisters came, and was much charmed. She praised their devotion, she thought their manner of life romantic, she advised Magdalen to become Sister Josepha's pupil in fancy work. What Magdalen Courcy did, her devoted admirer Viola Hastings must do; and though Mr. Hastings had to think twice before he could make up his mind to afford the price of tuition and materials which were mere nothings to Magdalen, he at last consented, and the two girls received instructions together.

Viola Hastings had a step-mother. If ever this step-mother presumed to have an opinion of her own, Viola put on an injured air, and covertly referred the difference between them to the "step" also between them. Mrs. Hastings did not think that an intimacy at the House of St. Vincent de Paul would

be beneficial to Viola, and in this opinion she was confirmed by Miss Judith Vaughn.

"Miss Vaughn says she will teach you any kind of fancy work you wish to learn, daughter," said Mrs. Hastings.

Viola grew restive at once.

"I don't wish to learn of her—she would not take pay—I shall not have charity lessons."

"I cannot feel that nuns are safe companions for a young Protestant girl," said Mrs. Hastings.

"The sisters are perfectly lovely," said Viola, "and Mrs. Courcy lets Magdalen go there as often as I do. She is her *mother*, and would not let her go if it would injure her."

There was an emphasis on the word *mother*. Mrs. Hastings had her baby in her arms, and she smothered a sigh in its little fat neck.

"Mrs. Courcy has been to see the sisters, and she knows all about them. You have not called there."

"No, and I do not think I shall. I cannot bear to have you go there, Viola. I wish you would be ruled by my wishes—"

"If I were," said Viola, "I should never have, be or do anything. You cannot be any more interested in *me*, than Mrs. Courcy is in Magdalen."

Mrs. Hastings lacked that decision of character which would have given Viola no more indulgence

than if she were her own daughter. She dreaded Viola's insinuations and the hasty judgment of society, if she exacted obedience and respect. If little three-year-old Annie had been in Viola's place, Mrs. Hastings would have refused her permission to go to the House of St. Vincent de Paul; but since Viola would not heed a request, she shed a few tears and let her go.

The sisters called Magdalen and Viola their "dear children." The girls had the freedom of the house and would sit with the nuns by the hour doing fancy work, chatting freely of all their affairs, and asking many questions which the sisters liberally answered. The housekeeping sister, Mary Angela, sent Mother Elizabeth Vallé voluminous letters, wherein very much of what Magdalen and Viola said was recorded. In a short time Mother Vallé knew them almost as well as they knew themselves, and was able to form a much more correct estimate of their character and prospects than they could.

The summer passed with this intimacy growing closer; the girls regarded the nuns as their best friends, and their familiarity with the House of St. Vincent de Paul was looked upon with respectful envy by their young companions, whose parents did not care to have the "spider and the fly" find its *ante-type in their families.*

Fall came, and Mrs. Courcy was going to the city to buy new clothes and new furniture. The woman was troubled with more time and more money than she knew what to do with, and this was one means of getting rid of some of both. Of course Magdalen was going with her, and of course she told the sisters.

"You must go to our dear convent of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows, and see our chapel, and our paintings. Mother Vallé will be so glad to see you and show you everything," said Saint Mary Angela.

"Do indeed, dear child," said Josepha, "and pray carry there for me a cluster of wax lilies which are too delicate to go by express. I vowed them as an offering to our lady's altar, if she would cure me of my lameness; and see, I can walk quite well now."

The girls looked on this recovery as almost miraculous, when it was thus put beside the vowed lilies. It is barely possible however that Sister Josepha owed it quite as much to Maria Felix's good judgment and tender care as to our lady. But, although Sister Maria Felix did the work, our lady's image was to have the pay, and Magdalen gladly promised to carry it.

"You must visit our House of Charity, and see all the invalids and orphans and pensioners, and our *chapel,* which is a great sight. Mother Denny will

show you everything herself, though she does not always see visitors. I will write to her about you. You will see my orphan nephew there, Philip Lester, unless they have sent him elsewhere."

Thus said Sister Maria Felix, and privately she said to Magdalen, "Give Philip my dear love, tell him to be a good boy, and when you come back tell me what he was doing, and all you hear about him."

"Oh dear, how I wish I were in your place, Magdalen," sighed Viola, as they walked home together. Money was nothing to Magdalen, and she asked her mother to take Viola with them to the city.

"Just as you like," said Mrs. Courcy, ever ready to gratify her daughter.

Magdalen rushed over to Mrs. Hastings' modest dwelling and demanded permission for Viola to go with her to the city. "Say yes, Mr. Hastings, say yes, or I'll turn incendiary and burn your store. Oh dear, Mrs. Hastings, come and make this man say what I want him to! You said yes, didn't you, Mr. Hastings? I hope you heard him, Mrs. Hastings!"

Mr. Hastings looked at his wife for a sign of advice. Mrs. Hastings demurred, for she knew, after permission to go was given, Viola would insist on a new hat and traveling suit, and money was not overabundant with Mr. Hastings. But a frown was gathering on Viola's brow, and Magdalen, the beau-

tiful, petted and happy, was so irresistible, that Mrs. Hastings looked "yes" at her husband, and the husband said "yes" to Magdalen, and while this was being said Mrs. Hastings was planning what she could deny herself, that Viola might have a hat nearly as handsome as Magdalen's, and that the new suit might be stylishly made.

Having thus obtained her wish, Magdalen got the baby, kissed it, shook it, praised it, and opined that Viola must be "perfectly happy with such a little tot to play with. It was so lonesome up home,—wouldn't Mrs. Hastings lend three-year-old Annie to them for one day at least,—it would be so delightful to have such a little pet."

Mrs. Hastings wished Viola were like Magdalen, and wondered if it were the beneficent influence of outward circumstances that made all the difference.

Viola spent the night previous to the journey with Magdalen. They were in the parlor after tea, a fire was lighted in the grate, Magdalen sat in the circle of ruddy-flame light, lolling in an arm-chair—boarding-school mistresses tell us *lolling* is ungraceful, it was not in Magdalen. Viola took a hassock at her friend's feet, and, folding her arms across her lap, gazed up into her face. Magdalen was at once Viola's idol and her ideal.

Capable of passionate attachments, with a keen

sense of the beautiful, and a romantic sentimentality, Viola had been growing up, her emotions undirected and her violent temper unsubdued: she was a girl of some ability and with much in her disposition interesting and attractive, but one to fill any mother's heart with anxiety. Plain of face, Viola intensely admired beauty, and Magdalen possessing beauty, wit and a subtle fascination acknowledged by all who met her, Viola paid her loyal homage.

This homage Magdalen recognized and indeed accepted as her due; from her earliest years she had been taught that nothing was too high to be tribute to Magdalen Courcy. To-night, leaning back in her chair, her mourning dress setting off her well-cut profile and clear delicate complexion, she idly gathered up the slender length of her jet watchchain, twining it about her white fingers, and slipping it through them in little coils, and met the worship beaming in Viola's eyes with a look of pride that was too well blended with love and too gracious to be displeasing.

Mrs. Courcy dropped her book in her lap, and turned her eyes upon the girls. She liked Viola, liked her none the less that she sat admiringly at Magdalen's feet, and crowned her queen. Like many other mothers, Mrs. Courcy lived only in her daughter; to her the future was full of visions for

her child, her choicest treasure and her darling care.

To the two girls the one chief point of interest in the city was the visit to the sisters at the convent of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows and at the House of Charity. Of this they chatted until bedtime, chatted in the cars, and were hardly willing to allow Mrs. Courcy to do any of her particular business before she accompanied them to these places. They had visited the stores times enough in other expeditions to the city, and were neither of them young ladies to whom a shopping expedition is the very quintessence of enjoyment. Magdalen at least had been taken to all the places of amusement and "sight-seeing," until they were robbed of novelty or attraction as far as she was concerned. Finally these two girls were convent bitten, and its "dim religious light" was all that would satisfy them.

Like many American mothers, Mrs. Courcy was obedient to the mandates of her daughter. She sent for a carriage and gave orders to be taken to Our Lady of Seven Sorrows. "Seven Sorrows" the coachman called it for short, and as "Seven Sorrows" it was known all over the city. So we shall call it also, to save time and trouble, for all we believe ourselves guilty of falsehood in limiting its sorrows to *seven*. *Seven?* *Yea, verily,* seventy times seven and seventy

times again, and yet you could not have numbered the stings and pains, the loneliness and disappointment and heart sickness, the bitterness and envy, the tyranny, the remorse and fear shut up in the convent of "Seven Sorrows."

"Seven Sorrows, ma'am!" and Patrick Connor opened the carriage-door and let down the steps. They had stopped before a large building piled up of solid blocks of granite as if its founders meant it to stand "as long as the sun and moon endure."

The convent of Seven Sorrows had a front of one hundred feet, and was three stories above the basement; it was a high basement, and had iron shutters always closed, the rooms receiving light from two windows in the rear, and from the gas that burned all day within. There was a small stone-paved area in front, and an enclosed porch to the front-door. As Patrick opened the outer door of this portico for the ladies, the loud sharp clangor of a bell sounded through the house, to warn the inmates of guests without.

"You may wait for us, driver," said Mrs. Courcy, and Patrick returned to his coach-box. After some delay the inner door opened slowly a very little way, and the eye, nose and half the mouth of a sister appeared at the opening.

"*We should like the* privilege of visiting your

house and chapel, and of seeing the abbess," said Mrs. Courcy.

"We do not generally admit visitors," said the sister.

"You will please hand my card to the abbess," said Mrs. Courcy, loftily.

The sister took the card, her face with its white wrappings and head covered with the black veil were withdrawn, the door silently swung shut, and the key was turned within, leaving the guests in the portico.

At length the sister returned, set the door half open, said, "Mother Vallé will be glad to see you," and Mrs. Courcy and her girls were fairly within the convent of Seven Sorrows. One of them found easier access afterward.

CHAPTER IV.

FATHER ARNHOLM ON WAYS AND MEANS.

THE opened door had admitted the visitors at the convent of Seven Sorrows to a wide hall paved with blocks of two kinds of stone. On one side was a small waiting-room barely furnished with cheap table and chairs, hung with several colored devotional prints, and containing a case in which were one or two small bas-reliefs and a letter from the pope, which had come to Mother Vallé from Italy, after an unusually large offering finding its way from "Seven Sorrows" to the Vatican. At one side of this room was a grating, behind which the sisters stood when receiving visits from friends. A heart pierced with seven daggers and emitting from the upper surface tongues of flame was a favorite device, and was carved over the doors, moulded in the iron of the grating, and painted on the walls.

The nun usher left her guests in the bare waiting-room for about ten minutes, and then returning, requested them to follow her to Mother Vallé's parlor. Mother Vallé advanced with a quick and firm step to *greet the strangers.* The grasp of her small thin

hand was strong and decided; the black eyes, that searched the new countenances, were restless and keen; her face was pallid and seamed with wrinkles, and if her gray hair had been revealed and her false teeth removed, she might have looked even older than she was. Erect and supple in her straight black garb, an unusually long and heavy rosary and crucifix depending from her girdle, her voice a clear, even treble, her words few and to the point, Mother Vallé appeared capable of holding steadily the reins of the convent of Seven Sorrows, and as many others as might be coupled with it, for years to come. In the superior's room were no ornaments or luxuries akin to the outer world. The whole apartment showed a mind and taste nurtured only in a convent. The furniture was of rigid mahogany and hair-cloth, and only articles of necessity, as sofa, table and chairs. The curtains and carpet were green and black, heavy and gloomy enough. Around the walls hung some dingy oil-paintings in black frames—scenes from the life of "Mater Admirabilis," wherein the "Mater" wore an invariable red gown of the tunic description, even after her assumption when she was represented as "being crowned by her son in the midst of the holy angels."

Magdalen presented Josepha's box of lilies.

"You shall accompany me to the chapel and see

them placed on the shrine," said Mother Vallé. "I desire also to show you a painting by one of our sisters, an excellent artist, and if you love music you will have an opportunity of hearing some, as a choir of the sisters are having an exercise in the chapel."

"You have pupils?" asked Mrs. Courcy.

"We do occasionally. Young ladies of talent and family who have a preference for this house, and the high order of instruction they here receive, are sometimes taken as an especial favor. We also have sometimes young friends as guests, who love our seclusion and quiet, who are for the time without homes, or are unhappy in them,"—a hint for Viola!—"who come here for a while and then go back to the world again, happier and better we trust for their sojourn with us."

After a little conversation the sister who admitted them was called, and showed them the sacristy, the library, the work-room, and the refectory; and then Mother Vallé gave orders that her visitors should be conducted to the gallery of the chapel to witness the unveiling of the picture and hear the music.

Despite all the manœuvers at the front door, Mrs. Courcy and the young ladies had been expected and prepared for; and the ceremonies of the picture and the *music had been well-timed* by this mother supe-

rior, who had so trained herself that she had a far reaching motive for almost every act of her life.

Just within the balustrade of the gallery ran a low carpet-covered step for kneeling, and there the nun bowed. Viola, ever ready to yield to new emotions, and now excited by the strangeness of the place, the pictures, the music and the flowers, at once placed herself by the sister's side. Mrs. Courcy glanced about. Two priests stood before the altar; in the front seats were postulants in thin caps, next novices in white veils; behind them a cloud of black-veiled sisters, with their prayer-books, reading in a loud singular tone with a regular rise and fall of voice. The abbess, entering at a distant door, took her place before the veiled picture with a nun at either hand. Seeing these things, Mrs. Courcy willing to conform to the habits of those about her, knelt also on the step within the gallery-railing. The abbess did not appear to be looking up; but she saw this concession, and a grim smile relaxed for one instant her set features. Noting the deference paid by the mother, Superioress Vallé awaited some sign of the same feeling from Magdalen; but that damsel leaned carelessly against a pillar, clasped her hands before her, and looked down into the chapel, with half-curiosity, half-indifference. The haughty daughter of the Courcys would not bend the knee to priest or

picture. A wrathful red stained Mother Vallé's lips and burnt a moment along her high cheek-bone, and her right hand clenched itself until the nails marked the palm. The voices of the priests sounded through the chapel, then the music of the organ shook the still perfumed air, and the veil fell from the picture. Mary was depicted weeping at the cross of which the lower portion only was revealed; little cherubs hung about her, one at her feet holding the seven times wounded heart. A moment more and a full choir of nuns took up the "Stabat Mater," and the sonorous full notes and stately words of the mediæval hymn seemed to shake the fretted arches of the roof.

The music and the surroundings entirely overcame Viola, and yielding to her ungoverned sensibilities she burst into tears. The nun at her side gently pressed her hand.

Mrs. Courcy volubly professed herself "charmed" and "delighted," was "so glad they had come when they did," would "never forget such a treat," etc., etc.

While the scenes at the chapel awoke no devotional feelings in Magdalen, they pleased her taste, and she told her mother she would not mind staying at the convent a few weeks or even months, to devote herself to music and painting.

"*How could I spare you!*" cried Mrs. Courcy.

"You need not," said Magdalen, "I do not doubt I shall find equally as good teachers elsewhere."

Their next visit was to the House of Charity. They were invited to Mother Denny's room, and found her more communicative than Mother Vallé; but the coarseness of her nature and its petty selfishness were apparent through all the thin disguises of garb and station. Mrs. Courcy afterward informed her daughter that "Mother Denny was evidently no lady—she had a large hand and incorrect pronunciation."

Ambrose was deputed to conduct them through this institution. They gave liberally to the charity-box, and bought at every show-case.

"How charmingly neat everything is," said Mrs. Courcy.

"How good of the sisters to educate so many children!" exclaimed Viola.

"This is certainly a great charity! How many orphans have you here?" asked Magdalen.

"Forty," said Ambrose, bowing at a shrine.

"And how many invalids in the hospital wards?"

"Twenty-six," replied Ambrose, and as they passed a holy water vase, he dipped his finger and crossed himself.

"How many pensioners?" was Magdalen's next question, after a few moments' interval.

Ambrose was occupying his time in saying a prayer;—he finished it and, bowing low, replied "Eighty."

"What a holy old man"—whispered Viola to Magdalen,—"so devout and sincere—I don't think you find such earnest piety in any denomination but the Catholics."

"He makes too much display to suit me," said Magdalen.

"I don't think he does it for display; see how he follows us reading his prayer-book—so absorbed in it, he has no idea we are speaking of him. Doesn't it make you feel devotional, Magdalen, to see these shrines and pictures and saints' names? religion everywhere?"

"No it doesn't," said Magdalen, shortly; "but Viola, I believe you are just the one to be bewitched by it."

"If I had as happy a home as you, and everything I wanted as you have," said Viola, sombrely, "I should not be driven to seek consolation elsewhere."

"Pshaw, Viola," said Magdalen, "your mother's real nice, and the babies are the darlingest little souls—"

"This is our chapel, ladies," said Ambrose, and fell on his knees.

There *were two others* kneeling in the chapel. An

old monk with a shaven crown and a boy of thirteen were bowed side by side before the grand altar. The monk said his prayers with closed eyes and bent head, the boy looked upward to the pictured Mary. They were Philip and Dominick, and Philip was happy in that he could now say his prayers in Latin. The two rose, "We will finish our lesson in the sacristy, son Philip," said Dominick.

"Is this Philip Lester?" asked Magdalen, stopping them. "I have just seen your aunt, Sister Maria Felix, and she sends her dear love to you, and bids you be a good boy, and learn all you can."

"Il est un bon garçon," began Brother Dominick, then recollecting himself, added in English, "He does learn most well; he is devout, très dèvout; the love of our lady is in his heart."

"And what shall I tell your aunt for you?" asked Magdalen.

"Tell her I wish she'd come back, I want to see her."

"It is wrong to want anything that the Church does not ordain," began Ambrose, sententiously; "as the Church thought right to send her away, it is wrong to wish her back."

"Wouldn't you, if she were your aunt and you wanted to see her?" demanded Philip.

"*I hope I have* no private wishes or affections,"

said Ambrose. "I have committed sin enough in my youth, without feeling rebellion to authority now."

"Mon frere, Ambrose," said Dominick, putting him gently aside. "Since Philip has not done so mooch sin in youth, ve vill let him rebel so far as to love sa tante now."

"I am glad to see you, Brother Dominick; you were at my house in Northville," said Mrs. Courcy.

Brother Dominick courteously paid his respects to the three ladies, and then led Philip away.

Mrs. Courcy and her girls returned to Northville, having seen the best side of the convent of Seven Sorrows, and also of the House of Charity. They were all well pleased, and Viola privately told the sisters that the convent seemed to her like heaven.

"It might be the door of heaven to my dear sister Viola," said Saint Mary Angela.

Just now Northville, with its church, its school and its sisters' house, was among the least important of Rome's interests; greater hopes hung about the institutions in the city, and Father Arnholm, the busy priest among these stakes in the city, was editor of the "Catholic Ensign." A Catholic newspaper is a great institution. It is prepared for the faithful to prevent their learning liberal-mindedness, free thought, free speech, or anything worth *knowing from Protestant* journals; and it is also

prepared for the inspection of Protestants, being sometimes held up threateningly like Patrick's shillalah, or suspended like the sword of Damocles over their heads; and sometimes thrown at them, like a sop to Cerberus, to quiet their fears, mislead their vigilance, disarm just suspicion, distract attention, and work the ways of Father Pope generally. Being used for all these purposes, it is gotten up with great care by the craftiest minds in the Church. Father Arnholm was one of these crafty ones, and was often busy for the columns of the "Catholic Ensign," the "Ensign" office being not far from his own dwelling.

Father Arnholm sat at his desk on a November evening. His room was warm from the fire in the grate, a handsome, bright-hued velvet carpet covered the floor, the furniture glowed in red reps, and the curtains were crimson and gold. Over the mantel hung a picture in oil colors—not a Madonna, but a fancy sketch of a gold-haired damsel with a lavish display of shoulders. Between the windows was a picture of fruits and flowers, flanking a decanter and wine glasses—a good picture, yet we do not see the holy father's need of it, inasmuch as he had the reality on a mosaic table just beneath.

The bell rang, there was a light step through the hall, a careful unfastening of the front-door, and presently a maid-servant ushered in a brother priest,

Father Ansel, instructor at the college and preacher of the Church of St. Ignatius Loyala.

"Hullo, help yourself," said Father Arnholm, putting his pen between his teeth, throwing a written page of foolscap to the floor, and taking from a niche in the desk a heavy ledger. The book had a clasp and a padlock, and Father Arnholm unlocked it with a little key hung to his watchchain. Father Ansel took a glass of brandy, wiped his lips, ran his fingers through his hair until it stood stiffly above his brow, pulled around a large chair and stretched himself in it with his feet toward the fire, his hands thrust in his pockets, his head tipped back, and his sharp, closely-shaven chin elevated. Over this chin his nose bent as a self-constituted committee of inquiry, while his lips, resenting this inquiry, curled away toward the corner of his heavy black eyebrows.

Imagine yourself lying in a forest-shade on a summer's day—you hear a stir in the stillness, you look —ha, near you the glittering half-shut eye of a serpent ready for a spring! it gleams along the dangerous triangled head, it frightens while it holds in fatal fascination—such an eye was Father Ansel's.

"His face was keen as is the wind
That cuts along the hawthorn fence;
Of courage you saw little there,
But in its place a medley air
Of cunning and of impudence."

Through the warmed and lighted hall came t
maid with a scuttle of coal. She wore a little wh
apron, and at her neck a jaunty red knot. "Bring
a cigar, Kitty, and a lighter," quoth Father Ansel.

The girl brought the cigar and lighter.

"Here, you Kitty, tell 'grandmother' to se
us a bowl of flip," said Father Arnholm, throwi
another sheet of foolscap on the floor.

Father Arnholm's housekeeper was a wrinkled c
dame in cap and spectacles, whom he designat
"grandmother." Very likely she was, though th
was no family resemblance. Kitty brought the f
on a salver, with a silver ladle and two silver cu
set it on a table midway between the two priests, a
departed.

"Here's to the Rhine!" cried Father Arnhol
tossing off a cup of flip. "Confound that wom
what did she make it so hot for, I've burnt r
tongue."

"My tongue's fireproof," said Father Ansel, knoc
ing the ashes off his cigar. "Here's to the Tiber
and he followed Father Arnholm's example. "I sa
Arnholm, were you inspired by flip when you got
last Sunday's sermon on Temperance? That was
smasher."

"Ja!" cried the German priest. "Flip is not f
the laity. Like the Eucharistic wine, I reserve

for the priests! Get on with your article there, while I tell you what to put in. Just state that there are not so many young men preparing for the priesthood as heretofore, the Church not being largely on the increase. Then you might just throw off an item stating that the Magdalena Foundling Asylum has been nicely furnished and made comfortable for the unfortunate infants in it, by the proceeds of the last sisters' fair, which was largely attended by our Protestant friends, and for which we offer them our thanks."

Father Arnholm wrote on. "I say, Ansel, what did the bishop do with that money from the fair?"

"I don't know, sent it out of the country, or bought Enfield rifles for all I can say. He is close mouthed over it."

"The bishop wants the parish statistics. His messenger is going over to Italy, and is to start next week. There's the book; come round here and set it down fairly in Italian," quoth Father Arnholm.

Ansel gathered himself up, took the ledger from Father Arnholm's hand, and saying, "He might send me, I hav'n't seen Italy this fifteen years," began to copy figures from the book on a slip of paper.

Again the bell rang. As the low sound of voices

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came through the hall, Ansel said, "There's old Dominick."

"We'll have some fun with him," said Arnholm, winking.

As soon as the monk entered, Father Arnholm pressed him to take a glass of brandy. He refused it, and sat down near the fire, holding his hands toward the coals.

"Try some flip," said Ansel, thrusting a cup of the hot liquid under his nose.

"Shall I be worse than a beast to drink when I am neither hungry nor thirsty?" asked Dominick.

"We do, are we beasts?" asked Ansel.

"My brothers, we have forsaken the world and vowed ourselves to poverty—does this room and this entertainment look like poverty?"

"Poverty on a certain scale," said Arnholm, picking up his papers and numbering them—"compared with a palace it is poverty."

"And it is a palace compared with those cells and forest retreats where the holy priests, monks and hermits of old made their abode,"—we write in plain English his mongrel speech—"It was in a bare cell that Saint Philip Neri wrote and prayed. Unless we mortify the flesh, my brothers, the Church will never again produce a Saint Simon Stylites, a Francis de *Sales, or a blessed* John Berchmans."

"Likely not," said Ansel, "a Church filled with such men would be rather a bore."

"Surely, Brother Ansel, your tongue does not take its instructions at your heart," said Brother Dominick, looking pained.

"Did you come to help us get up our statistics and our editorials?" asked Father Arnholm.

"I came to talk with you of the future of son Philip Lester: he is a gracious, pious youth, and if he takes holy orders may revive the Church, and show himself akin to those holy men of other days, Peter Claver, Saint Anthony of Padua, and the Fathers of the desert."

"Which would be more than our deserts," said Ansel, with a loud laugh.

"As your time is occupied, brothers, I can come again," said Dominick, mildly.

"No, stay now you are here, and we will talk by and by, when our work is done—perhaps you can help us in this with your advice. There's pen and paper, Ansel; get up that document and read it to me, and then you can hear how this last communication for the 'Ensign' sounds."

Ansel began writing rapidly. He was only copying fairly Arnholm's statistics. Arnholm on the other hand paused at times to think, at other times *he chuckled and rolled* his eyes. Withdrawing the

oblique glance wherewith he had favored a corner o the ceiling, he saw Dominick nodding in his chair.

"Brother Dominick, Brother Dominick! you a indulging the flesh by getting asleep, which is n edifying to this good company."

"Pardonnez moi," said the polite old Frenchma rubbing his heavy eyes, "I will not so transgre once more. I kept a vigil last night, in honor of S Stanislaus, I am getting old, and it makes slee come."

"A vigil," sneered Ansel to Arnholm. "I kept vigil too under a good pair of blankets, assisted by bowl of hot punch." He spoke so low, Dominic could not hear the words, but he caught the ton sighed and shook his head.

"I'm done," said Ansel, presently.

"Hold on—there—so am I—now read, while look over the book to see if you've got it right."

"Ah, h-m-m—yes—stop, you hav'n't got conver from Protestant Churches twenty—I believe you le it out on purpose—you know it's my best point."

"No, I didn't leave it out on purpose. See ther it is in."

"Let me see the figure—what word is that."

"Gained."

"Sure it isn't 'lost to' instead of 'gained from?'

"*Yes, I'm not* so deep as you are."

"You're too deep for implicit confidence. Here, Dominick, read that Italian for me."

"'Gained from Protestant Churches, twenty'—very good, my brother—very good—all your report is good. May the saints increase our holy Church."

How beautifully did Arnholm trust Ansel, and this honest, simple old monk was his resort at last when he wanted the truth told.

"Hear me read now," said Arnholm, when Ansel had got a fresh cigar and stretched himself in the easy chair, his sharp profile and pale olive skin clearly defined by the bright cushions.

As Father Arnholm scowled over his paper to decipher his script which was not of the clearest,

> "His forehead wrinkled was and furred,
> A work, one-half of which was done
> By thinking of his *whens* and *hows*;"

and the travesty which he had made of the statistics just read by Ansel was enough to add a wrinkle even to the most dishonest face.

Dominick bent eagerly forward to listen while Arnholm read. As he listened, Dominick's face darkened. When Arnholm came to the astounding assertions, that twenty thousand children were annually lost to the Romish Church, that Romanism in America increased chiefly by what it gained from immigration *from foreign lands, that* consequently American Ro-

manism's advance was European Romanism's decrease, and that Catholic immigration was falling off, Dominick burst forth :—

"Burn it, my brother, destroy it, tear up that paper. You are mistaken, mistaken! Compare what you were reading with what Brother Ansel has just copied from your book, and you will see the foul mistake."

"This is just as I meant to have it. Don't you know Protestant papers quote these things?"

"But this will please them, will console them, will lead them to undervalue the Holy Church!"

"That is just what we want to do," said Ansel.

"Want to please the heretics, the evil and rebellious children, the revolted servants of the house of Rome!" cried Dominick.

"Of course we will please them. I'm perfectly willing to please them out of the evidence of their senses if possible, and they snap up a bait easily."

"I cannot—I cannot know—ah, you distress me until I forget Englaise—Je ne comprends pas votre intention—"

He looked so distressed that Father Arnholm took pity on him, and replied, "We, Brother Dominick, would hardly believe what our enemy said of himself, certainly not without corroborating evidence of our own senses; but these Protestants believe our

statements as if we were the fountain of all truth," said he, with a self-satisfied, malicious sneer.

Brother Dominick still looked puzzled, "Our Church *is* the fountain of all truth," he said.

"See here," said Ansel, impatiently, "Arnholm's stuff is a feint to throw the enemy off guard. Do you 'comprehend' now?"

"Ah, oui, oui," said Dominick, thoughtfully.

Father Arnholm read on, something about Catholic children going to public schools, and then gathered up his papers.

"That matter of the schools needs looking after," said Ansel. "There are a dozen of your parish youngsters in the Third ward school-house now; you'd better go there to-morrow and raise a row. Get up a fuss that will find its way to the papers, maybe to the court-room; constant dropping you know, and if we badger them long enough we'll get our way about the schools yet. We will never have our triumph here until the schools knock under."

"Now by Saint Aloysius, the Egyptian, I'll do it," said Father Arnholm with gusto.

"Don't go alone; take Brother Dominick with you; two are better than one," said Ansel, nudging Arnholm's elbow.

"Truly; will you go, Brother Dominick?"

"I am at the service of the Church," said the monk.

Father Ansel was tying up the statistics he had copied, and putting them into an oiled-silk wrapper. "That goes to our venerable and holy *papa*," he said in such a tone, that Dominick gently remarked,

"I trust, my brother loves and reverences the holy head of the Church, the Vicar of Christ?"

"Why not? when he first got the tiara, I yelled after him through the streets of Rome, '*Evviva Pio Nono!*'"

Father Ansel shouted the old refrain so that Kitty heard in the dining-room, and stole into the hall to listen.

"And thus you love him still?" said Dominick.

"To be sure, why not? Believing in his promises, my father, my brother and my uncle fell under French swords and Austrian powder. But what of that? Pius IX. is my father, my brother, my uncle, my everything—indeed he tells me he is my Way, Truth and Life—what more can I ask? To be sure I tooted *Ahi Pio, No! no!* under the Vatican one night; but I was not myself—I had a domino on, like others. I shall go see the venerable papa some day:

'Give me a case to put my visage in!'

then say I. Arnholm, have Kitty bring another bowl of flip, and make it rather sweeter than the *last.*"

It was thus that these reverend fathers obeyed the injunction to "watch and be sober."

The clock hands rested together on twelve; clearly the hour strokes rang out under the hammer, and Father Arnholm's visitors arose to take leave. "To-morrow," said he, "at fifteen minutes to nine, Brother Dominick, I will look for you to go with me to that nest of heresy."

"Yes, brother; and I trust you will remember that zeal tempered with gentleness is the best zeal."

Ansel winked at Arnholm;—the sincere, quiet old monk was only a source of amusement to these men.

At five minutes after nine next morning, Father Arnholm softly turned the knob of the large lecture-room of the Third ward school-house. The pupils from every room in the building were gathered here for morning worship, each in a chair with hands demurely folded, and eyes on the principal, who stood by his desk. Behind him on the platform were three ladies and two young gentlemen, the under teachers in the school. The principal had his Testament in his hand, and had just begun to read the morning portion, when the door swung open and the two priests stepped within, Father Arnholm foremost.

Brother Dominick had provided himself with his missal, and had tied about his neck his choicest treasure, *a little black* velvet bag, containing what he

believed to be a fragment of the true cross, a joint of St. Mark's forefinger, and an infinitesimal portion of the rope that bound St. Peter to the cross of his martyrdom. Dominick had brought the missal and the amulet of relics as charms against all heretical sophistries, and to prevent him from losing his temper or saying anything unbecoming his office — of which last, however, there was little danger.

The principal, seeing the visitors, bowed and waved his hand toward two vacant chairs left near the desk for guests. Instead of recognizing this courtesy, the face of Father Arnholm grew dark, and in the deep grating tones he used in church to utter his fiercest threats and denunciations, he cried out,

"Let every Catholic child rise and leave this room!"

There was a sudden bustle, as in different parts of the room the children indicated rose.

"Let every child sit down!" cried the principal.

The children had been taught to obey the priest; but they had learned whose voice was law in the Third ward school-house. They sat down quickly.

"Catholic children! to your feet and obey me!" cried Father Arnholm, his voice quivering with fury.

"In your seats, every child of you," shouted the principal.

The children, who had again half risen in fear of

"Leave the room, sir, or I must call a policeman!"

Almost a Priest. Page 109.

the priest, dropped into their places in fear of the teacher.

"Sirs," cried the principal to the intruders, "you disturb my school; take seats and listen quietly to these exercises, or leave the room.

"I leave it when my children go with me," retorted Father Arnholm, hotly. "Children, to the hall!"

The frightened children looked toward the desk: the principal laid down his book, stepped from the platform and approached the priests, the two young men teachers following him. He threw open the door and Brother Dominick quietly stepped out. Laying his hand on the arm of Father Arnholm, the principal pressed him toward the door, saying, "Leave the room, sir, or I must call a policeman."

Father Arnholm turning about left the room, and the school exercise continued in peace, while the two priests departed from the building.*

"What will you do now?" asked Brother Dominick.

"I will bid you good-morning—I shall see you to-night—come to me at eight," replied Priest Arnholm, gruffly.

At eight, Brother Dominick found himself in Father Arnholm's parlor. Ansel was there, not loung-

*The performance above described took place in one of the largest cities in New York State.

ing lazily as the night before, but angrily striding up and down.

"Brother Dominick," said Father Arnholm, rising from his desk where he had been writing a glowing account of injuries and insults received by himself from the Third ward principal, "I am going to bring a suit for assault and battery against that fellow; it comes off to-morrow at eleven, and you are to be my witness."

"Of assault and battery, dear brother?" said Dominick, astounded.

"Of assault and battery, don't you know what that is?" sneered Father Ansel.

"Oui, parfaitment; mais, mon frere, there was—*no* assault and battery."

"None! come now, did you not see him lay his vile, foul, heretical hand on my arm, on my priestly robe!" cried Father Arnholm, working himself into fury.

"Oui, oui; mais cet assault and battery, is it not to hit, to beat, to strike violentment, to assail, eh?"

"See here, Brother Dominick, which had you rather do, knock down one of the boys up at the college, or hit his Holiness the Pope a cuff on the ear?" said Ansel.

"I should not *like* either, mais if I *must*, vy I had better knock down le garçon."

"Truly. Listen now, Dominick, while I explain this matter," said Ansel, placing himself in a chair behind the old monk. "You admit that you saw the principal lay his hand on Brother Arnholm to expel him from the room?"

"Non, non—to say go, or I call—call—police-homme."

Ansel muttered something under his breath. "Well you admit the laying his hand on his arm? That is enough, for, listen, in laying his hand thus on Father Arnholm, he laid his hand on the bishop, in assaulting the bishop he assaulted the archbishop, in assaulting the archbishop he assaulted his sacred Holiness the Pope. Now, Brother Dominick, is not one sacrilegious touch laid on so lofty a person an *assault?* It is not the violence of the thing done, but the greatness of the person so assaulted, that must be considered, and in that light a rude hand on the arm becomes an assault of the most disgraceful, unwarranted and extraordinary nature."

"Oui, vraiment," said Brother Dominick, meditatively.

"Considering it in this light, you must go as a witness to-morrow, not so much for our injured Brother Arnholm as for his defied Holiness the Pope."

"Therefore," said Father Arnholm, cutting short

the argument, "be at the court-room at eleven; I will meet you there; I have business first at the House of Charity. And mind you don't get into the fog and forget what you saw;—you saw Father Arnholm assaulted by the principal, when he entered as a visitor the Third ward school-house."

Brother Dominick went home bewildered. After he had gone, Ansel copied what account of the affair Arnholm had written, and signed it, "A Lover of Justice." He made a second copy, and then directed one to a daily paper of the city, and sent the other to the "Catholic Ensign," in which it would be published as copied from the city paper.

Next morning at nine, Father Arnholm went to the House of Charity. He sat down in Mother Denny's room to eat apples, and to give a highly colored narration of his visit to the school.

Ambrose was cleaning the grate and polishing the fender. He listened with his ears while he apparently prayed with his lips. When he was done, he went into the sacristy and found there Father Arnholm's coat. Ambrose, the devout, took down this coat and rubbed the sleeve and a part of the skirt on the door-sill; he then drew out his knife and cut a few stitches where the sleeve was sewed in at the shoulder; next he caught a part of the breast on a tack sticking out of the book-shelves, and giving a little jerk, produced

a tri-angular rent; next he doubled the garment hastily together and sat down on it until he heard the priest coming, then he hurriedly went to rubbing the stove.

'My coat, Ambrose," said Father Arnholm.

Ambrose picked up the garment in question.

"If I had known it looked so bad, your reverence, I could have fetched it to one of the sisters to mend and clean. Bad luck to the heretic that assaulted your reverence. Shall I brush the coat now or leave it as a witness of the treatment you got from him?"

"Help me on with it, I'm in a hurry," said the priest, giving no sign of his amazement or admiration of the stratagem.

At the gateway of the House of Charity, he met Brother Dominick.

"Vat is de matter," he asked, looking at the coat. "Voyez! I vill clean notre habit," and he pulled out his kerchief.

"Let it alone; it is where that rascal attacked me yesterday, pushing me against the wall, and tearing my coat. Let it alone, it will speak against him, and prove the justice of my cause.

Dominick looked sorely puzzled, eyed the coat again and again, and followed his brother priest to the court-room.

Arnholm pleaded that he had gone, as other people did, to visit the school, that he had desired to address the children, that he wished them to show the customary respect by rising before their priest, that he had not understood the nature of the exercise in process, that the principal had assaulted him, handled him roughly, pushed him to the wall and from the room;—and lo, in proof of it, as showed the Gibeonites rent shoes, worn garments, and mouldy bread, so Father Arnholm showed his coat-sleeve and breast torn, and the skirts soiled,—and here was Dominick for a witness.

As for Dominick's testimony, it was mainly that they went to see the school, knowing some of the children of Father Arnholm's flock to be there, and the principal had said they were disturbing an exercise and bade them go out, came to them in fact and opened the door.

Cross-examined, Brother Dominick did not come out much better. "Did the teacher assault the priest?"

"Oh, he certainly put his hand on him."

"Was he angry?"

"Yes, he must have been angry," and then softened the statement by adding, "How could he tell surely, he could not see his heart."

"Did he see the teacher push the priest from the room, tear his coat, thrust him to the wall?"

Brother Dominick mournfully admitted that he did not see *that.*

"And how came it that so violent a scuffle passed unnoticed?"

Brother Dominick was distressed, he looked about at Ansel, at Arnholm, at the lawyers and loungers; then his face cleared a little; he humbly stated that "he had been saying his prayers."

That absorbing devotion, which had prevented the monk from being cognizant of so fierce an assault and so violent abuse, so amused this heretical court-room that there was a general laugh.

The principal had the five teachers for witnesses of his provocation, and his mild and gentlemanly conduct. The coat of Father Arnholm had some effect, but was not accepted as evidence. The verdict was in favor of the principal, and Arnholm and Co., retired from the court-room disgusted. However he had raised a fuss and called public attention. One of the daily papers stated his side of the story, as he had written it, the "Ensign" apparently copied it, and Father Arnholm did not think this affair thrown away among his many ways and means.

CHAPTER V.

FUTURE OF THE BOY.

OUT of the assault and battery case Brother Dominick did not come with shining honors; indeed, Arnholm and Ansel abused him openly, and argued him almost out of his senses. Father Arnholm felt that Ambrose the devout had done himself credit in the affair, and, without alluding specifically to it, was yet willing to give him reward of merit.

"You are a good Christian and a zealous Catholic, son Ambrose," he said; "what is there I can do for you?"

"If I might be janitor at the college, I would humbly thank your reverence," said Ambrose, promptly.

"It is a modest request; janitor you shall be, my son," said Father Arnholm.

Janitor Ambrose became, although not without opposition. He had a little room for himself in the college court-yard, his keys hung on a peg, his brooms stood behind the door, he swept halls, made fires and carried out ashes. One would not think he had improved his condition in any respect, but to

Ambrose there were possibilities in this situation which the other did not afford.

One evening late in November, Father Ansel went to Father Arnholm's as he was accustomed to do nearly every evening. The wind was keen and cold, carrying with it sharp particles of sleet, whistling around corners and taking liberties with cloaks and wrappers—a wind very different from the winds of Italy. Father Ansel found the Northern November a sharp contrast to his native climate, and his temper grew sharp and bitter as the wind. But as he entered the warm hall of Priest Arnholm's house, he smiled—he smiled still more when he gave his coat to Kitty—he smiled because he carried little stings and torments with him for his dear Brother Arnholm.

"Who was that I met going out?" asked Ansel.

"An organ builder."

"What were you doing with an organ builder?"

"I mean to have a new organ put up in my church. I shall have it the largest in the city."

"And have a crowd at Matins and Vespers, and descriptions of the music in the papers, ah, ha!"

"That's just it—it will fill the church."

"You're looking to a bishop's cap, Arnholm."

"It's small matter what I'm looking to."

"I confessed a woman at the Central Hospital today. She died before I left the room. It was a case

of cold and starvation. Do you want to know who it was?"

"It makes no matter to me whom you confessed."

"No, likely not. It was your sister, Barbara Arnholm!"

Was it a little puff of chill, outer wind coming in through windows or door, that made a quick shiver run through Arnholm's frame? Whatever it was, the keen-eyed Italian saw it, and he continued to harp upon the string which he found to produce jarring discords under his fingers.

"Yes, your sister, child of your father and mother, rocked in your cradle maybe—or didn't you have any? Hunger and cold? Yes;—Dead? Yes;—here's a good fire, a velvet carpet, soft chairs; the pantry is full, isn't it?—servants and wine, and all that;—that's the brother side. Cold, starvation, sickness, hospital, death;—that's the sister side."

"Hold your tongue, can't you? How did I know she was cold, or hungry, or in a hospital, or dying?"

"You might if you'd looked after her: and then you forbid her the house, you know."

"What did she tell you?" asked Arnholm, uneasily.

"You forget that the words of the Confessional are sacred."

"You seemed disposed to tell them. If she con-

fessed the truth, she told you that when I was young she set my father against me, got what little money he had willed to her, married a heretic, spent the money, got divorced, and has been no credit to anybody."

"Still, I tell you she is dead, and it was hunger and cold!—but she was nothing to you!"

"No, she was nothing to me. Sister? pah, what is that? The Church is my mother, and she has given me more sisters than I can take care of. How many have I at Seven Sorrows and the House of Charity?—more than I can count—I'm sick of the name of sister."

"Well, now you've one less, which is a comfort."

"You've played false about that chair the boys at the college bought for the bishop, Ansel," said Father Arnholm, changing the subject. "It was I that started that plan, and we together were to write the note to send with the chair. You told me it would not be made until next week, and I was at the bishop's to-day, and there was the chair already presented, and he showed me the note signed by you, taking all the credit, and never mentioning my name."

"I gave money to it and you gave none," said Ansel.

"I need my money for other uses."

"Yes, to buy the bishop's cap! Don't trust me again."

"Never, never," cried Arnholm, angrily.

"It is only tit for tat," said Ansel. "I had promised the place of janitor to my servant, and you got it for that Ambrose, and you know he is all in your interest."

"Here, take a hand at cards," said Father Arnholm, pulling a pack from the desk. "Now, if Brother Dominick could only drop in to help us!"

"What an old mole it is!" cried Ansel. "I'll wager he is saying his prayers this minute, and, as it is Friday, probably he has fasted until he is half-starved. Fast days, he only allows himself a bowl of water-gruel after vespers!"

The two priests laughed loudly, and Arnholm laid down a gold dollar as stake on the game. They played for nearly two hours, not jovially, but silently, fiercely, like men who gamed in earnest, although risking but small stakes, one-dollar and three-dollar pieces gleaming on the little marble stand. The flask of brandy that stood between them was slowly emptied.*

*L—— K——, a monk educated in a monastery, says, "the amount of gaming done is incredible to an outsider. Drinks, money, garments, even missals and rosaries are stakes, and the gambling lasts for days." Himself had often been beaten because weary of the game he refused to take a hand.

"Confound you, Arnholm, you've won every penny. There are ten dollars gone to your pocket out of mine. You've marked the cards, you know you have."

"I hav'n't," said Arnholm, doggedly.

"I won't play another game with you—I know the cards are marked," said Ansel, flinging down his hand, and pushing back his chair.

Father Arnholm gathered up all the pasteboards and threw them across the room. Then there was silence while the two smoked. Probably the smoking soothed them, for at last Ansel said in his ordinary tone

"Some Christian Commission fellows are holding meetings among your folks down in Gabrielle street. They were at Patrick Connor's last night, and will be there to-morrow again."

Philip Lester would have remembered Patrick Connor's, for it was there he first heard that his mother was in purgatory.

"Be there to-morrow! No they won't—I'll be there to hinder."

"Hold on there, Arnholm; send Dominick the first time in your place, and let us see how the antediluvian will handle them."

"That's an idea. I will try it," said Arnholm, laughing.

"Since you've thrown away the pasteboards, let us

try the bones," said Ansel, pulling from his pocket a small round box and two dice. Father Arnholm drew the table forward again.

"One hundred!" said Ansel.

They played in silence.

"Mine!" cried Ansel, sweeping up the stakes. "One hundred over!"

"Mine again! Two hundred!"

"Mine. Two hundred again."

"Your bones are loaded. Take them, I won't play—that's a rascally cheat," cried Arnholm.

"They're not loaded—take that back."

"They are loaded, I'll prove it."

"Your cards were marked, and you know it."

The altercation rose so high that Kitty heard and crept to the door to listen.

This the housekeeper resented. "Go to bed!" she cried.

"It isn't time, and I'm not sleepy," said Kitty.

"Get to bed with you, I'm going to turn the gas off," insisted the housekeeper.

Kitty pouted and seemingly obeyed, but having gone up the back stairs, she stole down the front ones, and sat on the lowest step to listen to the dispute. It calmed down after a while, and Father Ansel said he must go home. Kitty darted from her place and ran up stairs, her blue dress vanishing around the balustrade as the two priests came into the hall.

"What noise is that?" asked Ansel.

"Probably the cat," said Arnholm.

No, good father, not the cat—only a Kitty.

After Ansel had gone, Father Arnholm turned off the gas and went to bed. If there had been a Bible in his room, perchance in the midnight silence had come from its leaves a voice crying out the character of the men in the "perilous times" that come "in the last days"—"Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good."

Next day, Father Arnholm sent Brother Dominick, whose good simplicity he made his jest and held in contempt, to stop the prayer-meeting at Patrick Connor's.

A little child had come to them, and Mary Connor was rocking it in its cradle. She had on her best gown, and Patrick wore his best coat. Two lamps, furnished by the holders of the meeting, were lighted, and Mary's ironing-board was laid over two chairs to increase seats. Brother Dominick entered and sat down. As he came in he said, "Benedicite" so earnestly and kindly that it seemed indeed a blessing.

Brother Dominick had been instructed by Father Arnholm, that the meetings at Patrick Connor's were of a disreputable character, that they were roots of

schism, anarchy and infidelity, that at them the Po was derided, the Holy Catholic Church blaspheme the Virgin and saints insulted, heresy upheld a God denied. Earnest as he was simple, Broth Dominick, armed with missal and amulets, and fi of pious indignation, hastened to Gabrielle stre But it was Dominick's kind instinct to believe not ing to be worse than it seemed; and when he s Mary Connor looking mild, Patrick honest, the ba innocent, he blessed them with a warm heart, and s down at their fireside. He had come all ready anathematize infidel and riotous intruders, to po out the full vials of the Church's wrath on the u godly; but seeing nothing to condemn and no one curse, he forgot his destined mission, and sat down counsel.

"My son," said he to Patrick, "I must have be deceived. I was told that you were holding idle a riotous meetings here." He took great pains to no French slip into his speech, and enunciated slow and seriously.

"Troth and ye were mistaken, thin," said Mar "Me Patrick is as quiet a lad as there is in the ci wid rispects to yer riverence."

"And are there not preparations here for a gath ing?" asked Dominick, looking at the ironing-boa the lamps and the rows of chairs.

"Yes, yer riverence, but just a dacent, quiet coming together of dacent folk, our neighbors of the street, a quiet street it is as everybody knows."

"And what for come they together, Patrick?"

"It was some young gentlemen asked me—three as civil-spoken young men as iver I set eyes on—saying they would furnish fuel and lights, and be away by half-past eight, and if the neighbors might meet them in our room, they'd be beholden to us. And after the second time of coming, the head one of them, as owns a furniture store, yer riverence, sent Mary her rocking-chair, and the baby his cradle."

"And what do they do, Patrick?"

"Troth, not a thing your honor, but shakes hands, and says, 'how do you come on? are you in work? how are the childer?' and speaks up for Temperance, and 'will we sign the pledge?' and reads a bit of good reading, and talks of loving the Lord and our neighbors, and doing the good we can, and sings that way you'd like to hear 'em, and prays right hearty, your riverence, and so on until they goes home."

"I'm afraid there's something wrong in it, Patrick."

"Troth thin, hadn't ye better sthop and see," said Mary.

"You, being innocent of ill intention, might wish me to; but I doubt if the others would not wish me

driven away. We had best dismiss them as they come, and have no more meetings."

"Faith and that wouldn't look roight, when no harm is done at all," said Mary, swaying in her rocking-chair and looking at the cradle.

"If they're for driving off yer honor's riverence, I'll drive them off," said Patrick, "that I will; but if they gives you good welcome wouldn't you sthop and see how it goes on?"

"That looks but just," said Dominick; "but I warn you, Patrick, if they defy God, the Church, or the holy saints, I shall not permit it."

"Troth they niver say a word of the kind, sirr."

At this juncture the three young gentlemen to whom Patrick referred entered, followed by about a dozen of the Gabrielle street people, and in a few minutes the number had increased to twenty, enough to fill Patrick's little room.

"It's the praste, Brother Dominick, sirrs," said Patrick. The young men shook hands cordially, and saying they were glad to see him, asked him to stay to the meeting.

"I heard it was not a meeting such as the Church would bless, and I came to stop it," said Dominick.

"We came to hold a quiet religious meeting," said the gentlemen; "we will go on as we usually do, and you can see if there is anything objectionable in what

we say. Perhaps you will help us—we should be glad to have you make a few remarks, as we do."

Brother Dominick sat down uneasily in the best chair, which Patrick placed for him. The meeting was conducted as usual, and very much as Patrick Connor had described; the portion of Scripture read was the marriage of Cana of Galilee. At the hymns, Brother Dominick, loving music, brightened up and beat time with his hand. When pressed to speak, he exhorted them to be kind to their families, sober and industrious, and to love and respect the Church.

"Well, father," said the young gentlemen, as the people were going out, "what do you think of the meeting?"

"It is not a bad meeting," said the old man, shaking his head, "but I did not hear you praise the Holy Virgin, or invoke the saints."

"We did not; we went straight to God the Fountain Head for our supplies of grace and mercy."

"That was bold and arrogant, my children; you should accept gratefully the intercession of the saints and go to God only in the appointed way."

"We do, father, through his Son, the one Mediator between us and him, the only 'Daysman' who can 'lay his hand upon us both.'"

"You are wrong there, my children, as when I have leisure I can show you. I trust you are not

far out of the true Church; you seem desirous of doing good. Take advice of holy priests whom God has set to be your instructors—as our good Father Arnholm—let alone the Scriptures and do not meddle in things too high for you. Good-night, my sons." And so good Brother Dominick had been at a heretical prayer-meeting!

"Well," said Father Ansel to Dominick next day, "did you abolish that nuisance, root and branch?"

"I could not find one nuisance," said Dominick.

"Did you not find a nest of reviling and blaspheming heretics?"

"No brother, I only found a few quiet people, singing and saying prayers."

"But as they did not sing and pray what we ordain to be sung and prayed," cried Father Arnholm, "you as a true son of the Church, should have cursed them and sent them away."

"Cursing is not much in my line, dear brother. I advised them to go to hear you preach, to pray to the saints and honor our holy lady; and then I came away."

"And never gave them even one curse!" cried Arnholm.

Dominick replied much as Balaam to Balak: "How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied?"

Dominick's course was reported to the bishop, and the old monk's confessor also reproved him for it. He accepted reproof with all humility, and, as in duty bound, acknowledged himself in the wrong; but to tell the truth he could not see the wrong, and only admitted what his superiors in office alleged. As for the bishop, he took priests Arnholm and Ansel to task for sending on such a mission one so unsuitable.

"I shall go myself next time," said Arnholm, angry that Dominick's offence was so quietly passed over.

"You should have gone yourself the first time," said the bishop.

"I'll have none of their prating and praying. I'll order them out of Patrick's room, and if they delay I'll kick them down stairs."

"Carefully, my brother; will not that be one assault and battery you know?" said Dominick, gently.

"If it is, I'll have it come up before Judge Hawkins, and he is sure to decide in my favor."

Judge Hawkins was one of Arnholm's twenty perverts.

"Or Judge Halters—he is our man, too," said Ansel.

It is curious about these judges—they seem special

prey to Rome—are they prey because they are judges, or judges because they are prey? We leave the question for the consideration of the thoughtful or the curious.

Father Arnholm now visited Gabrielle street, much in the spirit of the unrenewed Saul of Tarsus, "breathing forth threatening and slaughter."

He burst into Patrick Connor's room and found it much as had Dominick; but, unlike that gentle brother, he was not softened by the tranquil scene. Without a question, he cried out, "Vile traitors! how dare you hold heretical meetings in this room? Forsake your folly this instant, or I bring you all the curses of the Church. Let one of those sons of heresy cross your doorway again, let them whine out in your ears one of their blasphemous English prayers, and I cast you out from the Church. I curse you from the crown of your head to the soles of your feet, and debar you from Christian burial!" While Mary and Patrick had dared to reply to mild Brother Dominick, and even to reason with him, they bowed like bulrushes before this sweeping tempest of Father Arnholm's wrath. Patrick was dogged and secretly angry in his submission, but Mary was abject.

"We meant no harm, yer riverence," said Patrick.

"It's oursilves will obey ivery word of yer lips!"

cried Mary wringing her hands, "but niver spake of casting us two out of the Holy Church."

"I will so speak and so do," shouted the priest, lifting his arms above his head, as if to bring down curses. "If you receive these men or their books, listen to their words, obey their teachings, or believe there is one breath of truth in their doctrines, I curse you in bed and board, in doors and without, in the air you breathe, the clothes you wear, and condemn you to die unconfessed and unforgiven, and lie like dogs and heathen outside of consecrated ground!"

"Hear to him, Patrick!" shrieked Mary; "have pity on us, yer riverence, and we will obey you, we will do all you say. Have mercy on us and the innicent babby, and niver curse us like that."

"It's true what she says, yer riverence. We'll not set ourselves agin you nor the Church. What you tells us is our law sure enough; will that do you?" said Patrick.

Father Arnholm heard steps coming up the stairs, and throwing open the door he planted himself on the sill, crying out to the young gentlemen, "I forbid you to enter this room—you have come here like serpents, poisoning the hearts of my people—I forbid them to hear you, or speak to you—leave the place before I lay hands on you."

"That may not be in this country," said one of

the gentlemen firmly. "Ho, Patrick Connor, do you deny us your room and forbid us entrance? It is not for this priest to say."

"It *is* for me to say," roared Father Arnholm,—"this man and all that he has belong to me—I forbid you entrance."

"Oh, gentlemen," wailed Mary Connor from within, "for the love of heaven go away and come to trouble us no more, and bringing curses on us it is you are!"

"Speak, Patrick Connor! shall we go!" cried the gentlemen. Patrick hesitated, a surly look in his face, a restless gleam in his eye.

"For pity's sake, Patrick jewel, obey the praste, and don't desthroy us all, an' the babby as niver did harm—bid them go away!" burst forth Mary, grasping his arm, her face white with terror.

"You'd best go, we'll have no more meetings in here, sirrs," Patrick said reluctantly; for he had liked the gentlemen and their meetings, and his heart burned under the violence and arrogance of the priest.

For another hour, Father Arnholm remained in Gabrielle street, visiting all the Catholic families there, abusing, exhorting and threatening them, and finally left, confident that he had effectually broken up the heretics' prayer-meeting.

Mary Conner sobbed herself to sleep, and started often in her dreams, trembling with undefined terrors; Patrick turned wakeful on his pillow—there was a smothered fire of rage and indignation in his heart—must he be tutored as a child, his home ruled by a power higher than his own, his domestic peace invaded, himself and all that he had condemned to be under the authority of Father Arnholm? oh, if he dared—if he dared—and yet we know well enough he didn't dare—anything; there was the bond of habit, the life-long fear of the curse, the dread of unshrived death, and unbecoming burial; we cannot say that Patrick loved his Church much, we do not think he respected it, but he feared it, oh how he *feared* it. Rome has girt herself with a mighty wall of fear, in her fears is her power, there is the hiding of her strength.

What shall we do about it?

Do! there is one thing we can do; we can *guard the common schools*, knowing that to one educated therein the wall of Rome's terrors becomes a pasteboard rampart, falling before an honest assertion of individual rights.

From Gabrielle street, Father Arnholm went to the convent of Seven Sorrows where Mother Denny had been ordered to meet him with Mother Vallé. The priest wanted money, and he knew pretty well

where to get it—he wanted it for the new organ for his church.

Before entering on the discussion of how much he needed, and how it was to be raised, Mother Vallé remarked that she had a letter from Sister Maria Felix, that they had had their fair in Northville and cleared five hundred dollars, which was in the parish priest's hands, and about which he would report to the bishop.

"The fair turned out very well, and the Protestants helped heartily with it," said Mother Vallé, a flash of sardonic mirth darting across lip and eye.

"Sister Maria Felix ought to have made more than five hundred dollars; I'm afraid she did not manage properly," said Mother Denny, jealous and malevolent.

"That is very well for a beginning," said Father Arnholm. Mother Vallé feeling her choice called in question, said tartly, "You remember Sister Maria Felix has to work out there alone, she has not me to direct her constantly as you have."

This was "gall and wormwood," but Mother Denny swallowed it without a wry face, saying, "That is true, mother."

Father Arnholm was reading the nun's letter—he laughed, a dry laugh well described by Solomon "as the crackling of thorns under a pot." "That Prot-

estant girl, Viola Hastings, had one of the tables with Sister Josepha."

"Yes, and Sister Angela tells me that her mother is very much opposed to her being with the sisters. She spent all her pocket-money for the fair, and got material for fancy work from her father's store, also."

"Very good. You will have her here one day. She will count one any way, and what more?"

"She is a girl of ability, and has a little money, not much, which her mother left her," replied Mother Vallé.

"That other girl would be the greatest catch, Miss Courcy, and she could do anything with her mother. I saw that when I was there," said the priest.

"I'm sure the place is worth more force than we have there," ventured Mother Denny, her venom toward Josepha and Maria Felix running over again. "I thought both of those girls would have been converted to the true Church before this. Maria Felix and Josepha do not know how to manage them."

"Suppose we put Maria Felix in your place, and you go to Northville?" said Mother Vallé maliciously.

Mother Denny was subdued at once. Father Arnholm watched passively these passages at arms, being quite used to them.

"You must set to work here for a fair. I want about sixteen hundred dollars just now from here."

"How long can we have to get ready in?" asked Mother Vallé.

"Set it for early September, when the peaches will be ripe—the supper or fruit table pays well."

"Shall I write to Maria Felix to prepare for a strawberry festival at Northville?" said Mother Vallé.

"Very good. Keep the ball rolling!" replied her dictator.

How Mother Denny wished she had been quick enough to mention the strawberry festival; she was sure she was just thinking of it.

Despite Mother Denny's animadversions, Sister Maria Felix and Josepha were doing wonderfully well at Northville, although they could not boast of having made any particular impression on Magdalen Courcy or her mother; the invincible Miss Judith Vaughn still scattered tracts plentifully, and Saint Angela found her ministrations forestalled at some sick beds, and her plans for some orphans nipped in the bud by Judith Vaughn.

"How much good my dear girls might do if they were only good Catholics, if they were sisters," said Saint Mary Angela to the girls, Magdalen and Viola.

"We can do just as much good as we are. Look at Judith," said Magdalen.

"I am looking at her. Is her life devoted to good works and prayer like a sister's? Does she not dress and visit and amuse herself?"

"I'm sure she doesn't do so much good as a nun, she can't possibly," said Viola.

"Indeed she does. I can't answer for the praying for I've never seen her—she does not carry her prayers at her girdle, as you do, Sister Angela," said Magdalen, mischievously, "but such working as hers generally goes hand in hand with praying, I think. If she were a nun she would have to ask her superiors before she undertook anything, and all her fortune would have to be willed away to the Church; but now she can form her own plans of benevolence, can do whatever she sees to be best, and can use her money as her conscience and inclination dictate."

"But a nun, my dear Sister Magdalen, seeks counsel of higher judgments, and gives her money to the Church, in whose hands it can accomplish the greatest good."

"Judith Vaughn's judgment is as good as anybody's, and for my part I would not give all my money to be lost in the wealth of the Church like a drop in a bucket; but I would keep it to use as I saw best, so that I could say so many Bibles, so many orphans, so many heathens, so many charitable institutions, show what I have done."

"Oh, but that is so vainglorious," said Saint Maria Felix.

"I should not feel it vainglorious, I would not tell it abroad, I would just want to know for myself, where it went and what it did. As in your fair we did not put into a general fund, but I could see my Afghan, my toilette mats, my anti-maccassars," persisted Magdalen.

"Well," said Viola, "I should think nothing would be more delightful than to give one's self and all one has to the Church, to be devoted for ever to good works and worship. If I had as much money as you, Magdalen, I know what I would do."

"One must do according to what one has and not according to what one has not—that is all the Church asks, Viola," said Sister Josepha, encouragingly.

"Nonsense, Viola," said Magdalen, impatiently, "what is the use of hinting at such things? what would your mother say, I wonder?"

"She is not my own mother," said Viola.

"No person has any right to interfere with one's religious views," said Saint Maria Felix.

"And we should not shrink at hindrances and persecution; they will be set down to our merit," said Sister Mary Angela.

"It is no merit to turn one's family upside down,

and break folks' hearts, and set out to be something different from what anybody wants us to be," said Magdalen.

"You always argue and take the other side," said Josepha, "but you don't mean half you say."

* * * * * *

"I wouldn't wonder if the sisters completely turned Viola's head and led her off to join them," said Magdalen, privately to her mother; "but they can't turn mine."

"To be sure not, you are a Courcy; your ancestors were exiled for their religion; your great-grandfather built a church out of his own property; your grandfather bought a parsonage and paid all the minister's salary himself; and your father, you know, presented this church at Northville with a solid silver communion service—I always think of it when I go to communion, and how much it is to our credit. It would be a strange thing if you, a Courcy, the last of the Courcys, should turn against the Church of your ancestors, and divert their fortune to that Church which very likely shot some of them through the head. Not but that I like the sisters," said Mrs. Courcy complacently, "and am willing to encourage them—there is room for them here, I suppose, and their fancy work is truly commendable. As to Viola, it is very ridiculous, she had much better get a

good husband; there's the teller at the bank would make a very suitable match for her."

"What a funny mamma you are," said Magdalen, laughing, "if we do not look out you will have a wedding veil on her before the nuns get a black veil ready."

The nuns however were not behindhand on the veil question. Slily and privately they pressed Romanism on the romantic and self-willed Viola. They suggested secresy and hinted of parental tyranny.

Obedience, Ignatius Loyola tells us, is the foundation and groundwork of religion, obedience is the one great demand and cry of the Romish Church. It is true they want obedience to priests and all orders of clergy, to Church demands and Holy Sister Saints, obedience the most entire, degrading and self-abnegatory. But still the Romanists do not scruple at beginning a religious education, by teaching *disobedience* to parents. They first teach revolt and contempt of parents and then submission to their conscience-keepers in the *un*holy Papal Church. Nor need it astonish us that they begin religion by breaking the fifth commandment when they boldly carry it on by going rough-shod over the second. Yes, so it goes—dear Viola, you are not bound to submit your religious views to your parents, but, dear Viola, you are bound to submit your religious views and all

views to the priest—and a pretty time dear Viola makes of it.

These priests! these priests! I have shown you in Fathers Ansel and Arnholm what many of them are like. I have shown you in old Dominick a good exception, but an exception which is rare, and despised for its simplicity. These priests are often men who would not be tolerated in the communion of any other Church; but their office, even in Protestant eyes, spreads such a glamour over them, that they are held up as models of learning, ability, chastity, honesty and probity; and untold fortunes and hosts of silly women are blindly put at their disposal. Dear Protestants, I have cried to you of sheep folded by the wolves, and shepherded by jackals, until I am well-nigh ashamed to repeat the warning!

Priests being mortal like other men—thank God for it!—it must needs be that new priests shall be trained up to fill the vacancies occasioned by death. Others are needed also to supply the places of the few who slip off to Protestantism, and of some who rush recklessly away from all religious views. There are colleges for training these neophytes. There was such a college next the Church of Saint Ignatius Loyola, and Dominick was eager to have his dear Philip Lester trained there for a priest.

To decide the question for Philip, Ansel, Father

Arnholm and Dominick met for consultation in Ansel's room at the college. No wonder such consultation was needed. To be educated for the priesthood is a mighty matter. How wise ought a man to be to understand fifteen mysteries! how devout, to embrace seven sacraments! how holy, to offer continually in sacrifice the very Son of God!! How learned must be the man who is able to read the Latin of the "Ritus et Preces," and the Vulgate; what comprehensive grasp of intellect is needed to answer "Braun's Curious Questions," receive "Hay on Miracles," adopt "Principles of Church Authority," familiarize one's self with the "Manual of Disputation," be able to identify "Protestantism and Infidelity," reach the "End of all Controversy," and be finally planted on the "Ground of All Faith!!"

Such was to be Philip Lester's future. All these things he must know and accept. He was now a serious, ignorantly devout, humble and earnest boy, accepting whatever was told him, and believing that the fiat of the Church stood equally mighty as the voice of the Eternal God.

Led by Dominick, Philip left the House of Charity, and Ambrose set open to him the gate of the Jesuit college.

CHAPTER VI.

FESTIVAL OF THE ASS.

PHILIP entered the precincts of the Jesuit seminary with reverent steps and awe-filled heart. To him its unfolded gates were the portals of the temple of knowledge. Here was holiness, safety, wisdom, peace. Adoration of Mary was the ruling passion of his young and enthusiastic heart; as he woke in the morning, "Mary" was the first word on his lips; he fell asleep murmuring an Ave to the idol of his love; when he saw the name of Mary in a book he pressed it to his lips.* Ever before him rose her ideal image answering in feature, shape and color to that triumph of the painter's skill, the rare altar-piece in the House of Charity—any less fair picturing seemed to him a sacrilege; he was ready to weep that to an artist's eye he had not joined an artist's hand, that he might go from shrine to shrine replacing with gracious delineations of the queen of heaven those pitiful daubs, which, boy as he was, awoke his disgust, and were he knew the derision of

*Practices recommended to lovers of the Virgin in "Month of Mary."

the more cultivated Romanists and contemptible [illegible] the eyes of heretics. He carried daily with him [illegible] little book externally like the pocket-Testament of [illegible] devout Protestant, and to the rhapsodies of this book [illegible] he often fondly turned.

Our boy was changed from the lively lad who ran away to visit Guilbault's gardens, stirred up the animals, saw the dances, and indulged in a surreptitious glass of ginger-pop. A great sorrow, a silent life and much reading of legends had given a hot-house growth to a naturally dreamy and impressible nature. His was doubtless a wild enthusiasm; a boy's hasty passion that would fade away; the yearning of a child too early weaned from mother-loving; the worship a sensitive heart gave to beauty; the religious instinct stimulated into a sensuous idolatry.

Among the motley throng of students that gathered in the Jesuit seminary, unusual devotion, a craving intellect and a delicate taste set Philip alone. While to the church which adjoined the seminary others came only at the regular hours of service, Philip lingered there through much of his leisure time, luxuriating in frescoes, paintings, carvings and statuary, such as are seldom collected even in a Catholic church. Belonging to the richest order in the world, an immense sum had been lavished upon this Church of Sa[illegible] Ignatius. Before its glories all

the adornments of the chapel of the House of Charity, save the altar-piece, faded, and it seemed to Philip that his eyes could never be satisfied with seeing.

To Philip were assigned the duties of an acolyte. He had black gowns and white surplices and scarlet garments which Protestants would show their ignorance by calling "capes," all of which portions of clothing were esteemed necessary to the service of a God who looketh not on the outward appearance, and to the salvation of poor sinners for whom, singularly enough, the co-equal Son of God offered once ineffectual sacrifice. It is such a blessing to think that the mighty mass of one hundred and ninety-five millions of men, being Romanists, have the Church and the Virgin to take up for them the unfinished work of Jesus Christ, and round it to completion.

Desiring instruction and the gratification of his tastes rather than the companionship of his equals in age, Philip was often alone, often with Brother Dominick. One of his duties was to decorate the altars of the church with flowers. Early in the morning he arranged bouquets and garlands for the grand altar, and this done, with tender love he placed in parian vases white lilies only on the shrine of her whom he called "The Lily of Nazareth." He was grouping these flowers, and singing softly

"'A wanderer here through many a wild
Where few their way can see,
Bloom with thy fragrance on thy child,
Mary, remember me,'"

when Dominick came slowly down the aisle and stopped beside him.

Philip had laid the last of his lilies in their place. The painting before which he stood represented Mary with lilies in her lap and hands, while two angels bending above her held a crown over her head. The lights in the picture came from the crown and fell brightly over the fair brow, the golden hair, the white hands and whiter flowers.

"Is she not beautiful?" said Philip, "Regina Angelorum?"

*"Very beautiful," said Dominick; but his tone was far less ardent than the boy's utterance.

"Is she not the lady and mother of your soul?" asked Philip, quickly.

"Truly. She is the mother of all faithful Catholics."

"I love her," said Philip, earnestly.

"To love her is set down by the fathers as a sign of predestination," said Brother Dominick. "It is the true Catholic instinct, and a fountain of grace—

*Hereafter for the sake of perspicuity we write out fairly our good monk's broken language.

our Lady says, 'I love them that love me'—of her David says, 'I saw our lady ever before my face, because she is at my right hand that I should not be moved, therefore hath my heart exulted, and my flesh shall rest in hope.'" *

"I'm glad to hear you talk like that," said Philip. "I thought from the way you spoke you did not love her so well as I do."

"Sorrow, my son, is killing to the heart as frost to flowers. As man grows old in years and in suffering the fervor of early loving may seem to die; and yet, my son, I trust it is only the outward blossom that dies; the root I hope is here, here in the 'silent depth of my heart, where germinate the roots of devotion to Mary,' as our little book says."

Yet, even as he spoke, Dominick knew that there was in his heart a thought he might not speak, that though the love of Mary had sufficed for the transient griefs of life's April season, there was a longing for a higher love, now that the winter of his age had come.

"We read in our lesson from the Abbott Blosius, yesterday," said Philip, "that Mary is 'our only Advocate,' and there was a note from Saint Bonaventura, saying that her power has 'no other limit than the mighty power of God.' Our teacher said that the reason there were deluges, fire from heaven, fiery serpents,

* "Month of Mary," by Rev. J. Joslin.

and the earth opened to swallow up sinners in olden times was, that there was no Mary to come between man and God.

"That reminds me of a picture of a vision of my patron saint, Dominick, and if you will come to my cell I will show it to you," said the old man.

Philip turned eagerly to go with the monk, and, as with springy step and eyes glowing with expectation he walked beside him, some contrast between himself and his companion's slow gait, bowed head and frosty hairs struck him, and touching his arm, he said softly, "Brother Dominick, you tell me you have suffered."

"All suffer," said the monk, patiently.

"And do you now? are you suffering to-day?" persisted the boy.

"Son, sin is the fruitful seed of suffering; they who have sinned *must* suffer."

"I don't think you're much of a sinner, Brother Dominick," said Philip, bluntly, "and I don't want to think you're suffering."

"Be not distressed, my son. I can say with blessed Saint Theresa, 'Let us live in silence and hope, our Lord will take care of the souls he loves.'"

Philip was about hastily to remark that he thought taking care of souls was Mary's business; but he was overawed by the authority of Saint Theresa, and only

muttered something about the "Mother of Dolours," and just then they came to Brother Dominick's cell. A pallet, a stool, a table, a brown jug full of water, a crucifix and a breviary were apparently all the place contained: but Brother Dominick opened a drawer in the table, and from under writing material took out a portfolio, and while Philip watched with eager eyes he spread its contents on the table.

"Oh how beautiful, and all about our lady!" cried Philip.

"They were the work of my only sister, a nun of the Sacred Heart of Mary at Amiens, whose religious name was Maria Dolores. She painted much for the convent, and after she died, when she was twenty-three years old, I got these pictures."

"Is this Saint Dominick's vision?" asked Philip.

"Yes. You see the arm of Christ is raised in wrath to pour fiery darts upon sinners, and Mary lays her hand upon it and prevents him."

"Out of Mary God is a consuming fire," said Philip, repeating only what he had been taught.

"I should not have chosen that subject myself," said Dominick, meditatively, "for it has always seemed to me that the love of Christ must be as high as any when it caused him to die for us. But as I told you, son, these pictures are my sister's work; she was especially devoted to the blessed Virgin;

she was a woman of strong mind and great genius; in our family she should have been the son and I the daughter; but God knew best, and she is dead."

"Our lesson this morning is in Canticles," said Philip. "The theme is given us, the 'Glories of Mary,' and we trace out Mary in the book of Canticles as it is abridged in our lesson-book: Father Ansel says all that is of importance is there. This is the Annunciation, isn't it?"

"Yes. See Gabriel kneeling before the Virgin of Nazareth."

"Of course," interrupted Philip, "for she is queen of angels, and so they ought to obey and worship her, and then they were all created on her account you know; God made the angels to be types of Mary's virginity, the seraphs as types of her love, and the cherubs of her wisdom; all nature is but her portrait; my aunt told me that at the house while I was there."*

Dominick looked sorely puzzled; but he knew that silence was golden; so without comment on Philip's words, he drew forward the next picture. "Here is our lady preparing the food which the angels carried to her Son after his forty days of fasting."

"How tender and nice she looks getting it ready," said Philip, not noticing the absurdity of the modern

* "Month of Mary."

willow lunch-basket and fringed damask napkin, with its elaborate red border—"and how pretty those little angels are who are waiting to carry it. Why does Mary always have on a blue mantle?"

"To show her resignation, my son."

"And her red robe?"

"Because she is the queen of martyrs."

"There is the bell. May I look at your pictures some other time?"

"Surely. Come here often;" then, as Philip turned to pass him, Dominick arrested his steps, placed a hand on either shoulder, and looking earnestly in his face, said, "Improve your time, and cherish devotion my son; I have hoped you are to be a light set in a Church over which of late years a darkness has gathered, a fire to warm an order that is growing chill. May the sacred hearts of Jesus and Mary bless you, my boy."

The nine o'clock bell had rung and lessons were now in order. The mode of instruction was generally by lectures from different priests or monks, notes being taken by the students and questions subsequently asked.

The "Fathers" were also studied, and the devotions of Saint Bonaventura and the venerable De Ponte were favorite books. Themes were given out, sustained by abridgments and garbled fragments of

Scripture, and to have a correct lesson these perverted excerpts of the word of God must be thus applied; but when it was done be sure there was no mention made of wresting Scripture to one's own destruction.

For instance, given the proposition that the Virgin was Immaculate, parts of the Book of Psalms would be handed over to sustain the theory, and from passages as remote as the twelfth verse of the forty-fifth Psalm (which they read "Vultum tuum deprecabuntūr," etc., and knew very well as the Introit of a mass,) to other verses which they said declared Mary the tabernacle of God with men, and the Ark of the Covenant, they found proof of their doctrine and confirmation of the litany of the Immaculate Conception, and saw neither blasphemy nor absurdity, in calling the gentle woman of Nazareth "Immaculate Advocate of Sinners," and "Immaculate Trumpet of Holy Poverty."*

The whole of Canticles, and the larger part of the Book of Revelation were made to apply to Mary, and from the first chapter of Genesis, where the words "Let us make man" were converted into "Let us make Mary,"† to the Apocalyptic vision of the New Jerusalem, these students were taught to view the Bible as a fountain of Mariolatry.

* Litany of B. V. M.

† "Month of Mary." Published by P. O'Shea, N. Y.

Going from such lessons as these into the gymnasium for an hour, when free conversation was allowed, what wonder that much of their talk turned on the subjects of their studies.

When we say "free conversation" we do not intend that the boys were left to their own impulses. A monk or priest with missal in hand sat on the seat of one of the windows; and, while his look was on the volume he held, he had the pedagogic eyes in the back of his head, his ears caught nearly every word spoken; but unless he were appealed to, or the holy Church were assailed, he gave no sign of vitality, except turning the leaves of the missal. Of all the monks the boys preferred to have Dominick in their gymnasium, for he was ready to believe good of everybody, never suspected them of mischief, and they found their greatest freedom in his presence. Among the youthful crowd in the gymnasium were a vivacious Frenchman, a credulous Irishman, a coolly indifferent American, a sly Italian, a hot-tempered Spaniard, and a resolute German. Tutored and watched, guarded day and night as they were, the boy spirit was in them, and sometimes the boy blood rose up for mischief, and the antagonism of many nationalities was merged in the unity of mobism, when they would relieve themselves by a "rise" against authority.

"What are you in here for?" asked one lad of another, as Brother Dominick took his accustomed seat and opened his book; "I thought you had a penance to do, for not knowing your lesson."

"I got excused from doing it until night; then I shall repeat the litany for the dead: I had my choice of litanies, and I took that because a year ago my mother died."

Philip drew near the speaker. He too had lost his mother, and the old wound opened when the words were spoken; a vision came up of dismal Gabrielle street, and of a dead form with clasped hands and glassy eyes half open; the gymnasium swam in mist before him; he placed himself beside the young Irishman who had spoken, and said, "So have I lost my mother."

"So have a good many of us," said the Spaniard, "but what's the use of mourning over it; we cannot stay with mothers for ever."

"To lose them is hard enough," said Philip, warmly, hurt by the careless tone, "but that is not the worst of it. I could have given my mother up, for life was hard to her, and she was lonely; but there is the fearful thought of purgatory. It comes to me at night, can my mother be *there!* And then the altar for the souls in purgatory—the sight of it nearly kills me sometimes."

"No need for *you* to feel so," said one of the boys. "The blessed Virgin has more power over purgatory than any one else has, and she will surely take out your mother; you are such a servant of the Virgin and so devoted to her, to carry your mother to Paradise would be the least she could do for you."

"Yes," said the Italian, with a covert sneer, "the holy Virgin descends every Saturday into purgatory to see if she can find there any souls who are her property and carry them out."

"As to the purgatory, I did not fret over that," said the Spaniard, "for my mother died on Thursday night, and as she wore the Scapular of Mount Carmel, and kept Wednesdays and Saturdays, and recited the rosary and the little office, she could claim the Sabbatine privilege and get out the first Saturday, nobody having power to hinder her—and that was only a day and two nights."

"I say, Ferd, do you wear the brown Scapular too?" demanded the boy who began the discussion.

"To be sure I do. Are we not told that the sufferings of Christ were not to be compared to the torments of purgatory? and these may be endured ten, thirty, fifty or a hundred years."

"I don't know what the Scapular of Mount Carmel is," said a new pupil.

A cry of astonishment arose at this, and several

hastened to explain the advantages of this especial Scapular. The last remark of the Spaniard had been too much for Philip, and he slipped apart from the group and turned toward Brother Dominick, as to one who had himself suffered affliction and who could feel for him.

"Brother Dominick," he said, "will you tell me about your sister?"

The monk laid down his book.

"It is a long while since I spoke of her to any, my son. I don't know why I should want to tell you of it, but perhaps it may be a lesson to you. It is not much, only this:—There were but two of us, Minette and I—for, although she bore her religious name for seven years, I think of her oftenest by the name I called her when we were little children, and long time as it is, I dream of her still, and, in dreams she comes to me not as a 'religious,' not as when we parted, but as she was when a little girl and my playmate, in our mother's house. We lost our mother early, and to obey her last commands we parted to enter each a religious house, she to become a sister of the Sacred Heart of Mary, I to be a monk in a Jesuit college—in our land they give the tonsure early, Philip—I was a monk when but little past your age. Our confessor at home was the General of my Order, and he was also my sister's confessor in her convent.

He held her in high esteem for her devotion and fine mind, and said she would be a second Saint Catherine of Sienna. We were allowed to write to each other, and until she was twenty-two my sister was happy in her convent, her duties and her art—at least I believed so."

"I've often wondered what makes sisters look so unhappy," said Philip, "and so old—my mother had so much trouble and yet she looked younger and happier than sisters. If you look right into their eyes it seems as if they were just going to cry, although they have everything to make them happy."

"They may gain in a religious life such clear views of holiness, that it is a cause of mortal sorrow that they cannot in life attain to sinlessness—that was doubtless my sister's case—at least I try to think so."

"And she told you she was unhappy!"

"Oh no, no. But there was a little word which in childhood she had used when she was troubled, and by a change of form that word expressed for her great sorrow; this word crept into her letters, and came in more than once, and it told me of some grief that could find no earthly cure, and stopped short of heavenly healing. I had been permitted to visit her once a year, and now I asked the privilege—"

"It was never refused!" cried Philip.

"Surely."

"How wicked! how cruel!"

"Hush, boy, do not condemn our reverend General. Do you not see that, being vowed to heaven, my sister and I had no right to private affections? They would wean our souls from higher things."

"I can't believe it," said Philip with set teeth.

"I must believe it; it accords with my vow, and I should at once have submitted and so should she. All our bitter trouble came from rebellion against authority, and a setting up of our own opinions. I urged, my sister begged and insisted—she knelt to her confessor to obtain permission for me to come—and he believed she had something on her mind that she was resolved to confess to none but me, which was wrong enough, for I was not her confessor—my poor hot-headed Minette!"

"He ought to have let you go!" cried Philip.

"He must have done right—he was General of our Order, and as such loved us both. He told me to write her that I would not come, that we would meet no more, and that she must unfold all her heart to him. He bade me do this, as she had failed in health and would probably soon die of consumption."

"And you did it, Brother Dominick?"

"Truly, boy, I obeyed, but in a wrong spirit. I

wrote it rebelling in my heart. My punishment came. My poor Minette sent me a letter secretly—I received it as secretly—she implored me to come to her—she was dying—she suffered mental agonies—she was going to eternal death. This must have been insanity, and I should have addressed myself to prayer; but I here committed the great sin of my life. Had I been obedient here, I might have won her salvation and my own eternal content, and risen to be a blessing to our Order and the holy Catholic Church. Instead of this, I revolted against authority. I went to her. She was wasted, as our confessor said, by mortal disease. But what availed my visit? I broke my own vow of implicit obedience, but I was not allowed to cause her to break hers. Her mother superior was true to her charge, and before we exchanged a word two sisters carried my Minette out of my sight."

"She spoke to you—"

"Only one word—'brother!'—as she spoke they took her in their arms, and from that moment she was insensible."

"She died?"

"She is dead."

"And how, and how soon?"

"God and the angels know, my boy. For me, I had merited punishment; merited death for my dis-

obedience.* Our General kindly gave me solitary imprisonment, and after two years allowed me our books to read. I made my submission many times, but, Philip, I believe not sincerely. However, as years went on there came something into my heart that had never been there before. Ambition died, self perished, eternity grew before my eyes; life, how sharp soever its pains, seemed short indeed; my soul was able to bridge the pangs of purgatory and rest in the hope of a heavenly land. I have gained from somewhere a blessing which I cannot express to you, which I cannot explain to myself."

"Brother Dominick, you spoke of years."

"It was ten years, Philip."

"Ten years, brother, ten years imprisoned—alone—"

"Have I not told you what good came to me from it? At the end of that time our General died. You know, Philip, when a king comes to his throne the prison-doors are often opened: so this good man, going to his celestial throne to reign with Christ and Mary, sent me pardon—his blessing—those pictures. Then I was sure that my Minette was dead. I spent in our Oratory two months, one in offering penitential prayers for myself, the other in the indulgence prayers and rosaries for her soul. During those two

* See "Loyola and the Jesuits."

months I fasted entirely every alternate day. I was then sent to this country, and allowed to bring my missal and the pictures with me."

"And you heard no more from your sister?"

"No word."

"Suppose she had not died—suppose she lives yet!"

The monk's face blanched—a wild horror filled his eyes—"Such thought has come to me—it is the devil's last strong temptation—utter it no more. How old do you think me, Philip?" He spoke with an evident attempt to change the conversation.

"Seventy, perhaps," said Philip.

The monk made no reply. Bowed form, gray hair, wrinkles, hollow eyes, these had ten years in a dungeon given him. Brother Dominick was forty-five!

But while the monk, prematurely old, and his pupil, unnaturally grave, had touched such pitiful themes, the group of lads who had withdrawn to the farthest part of the gymnasium, trusting to their teacher's evident preoccupation, had indulged in quite different conversation. As they had finished the catalogues of the privileges of the different Scapulars, the Italian said, "These are disputed by some, denied too by others. There are pious beliefs in our Church which change and are done away. I have

heard of such things in Italy, and here also. I think even some of those litanies will go out of use."

He was one of the oldest pupils, was about to be ordained a sub-deacon, and was listened to respectfully by the others.

"Observances do die out," said a young Breton, whose short solid frame, low heavy brow and strong thick hair betokened his descent; "did you ever hear of the Festival of the Ass?" His small bright eyes sparkled with fun.

"No, no, what is it? tell us," said several at once.

"My grandfather told me of it. It used to be regularly kept in Brittany, but is not observed now. It honored the ass which carried Mary and her son into Egypt. There was a hymn to it too."

"The ass ought certainly to be honored; the cave, the manger, the carpenter's shop, all those things are reverenced, and the people of Brittany showed their piety by not neglecting the ass," said the Italian, as ever with a sly sneer.

"Tell us how they did it?" said an inquisitive American.

"They put a young woman holding a baby on the ass, led it to the altar of the parish church, blessed it, gave it a handful of barley, and sang the hymn."

"What time of year?"

"Why, the middle of February, I think."

"Let us hear the hymn," said the Irishman who had missed his lesson and was to do penance in the evening.

Speaking in a low, cautious tone, the Breton quoted,

"From the country of the East
Came this strong and handsome beast,
This able Ass beyond compare,
Heavy loads and packs to bear.

"Now, seignor Ass, a noble bray—
At large your beauteous mouth display—
Abundant food our hay-lofts yield,
And oats abundant load the field—
He haw, he haw, he haw!"

A roar of laughter unprecedented in those quiet halls greeted the Breton's recitation.

Philip had just guessed "seventy" about the monk's age, when this hilarious shout broke forth, and Dominick hurried toward the noisy group. At the same moment Father Ansel and the janitor, Ambrose the devout, appeared at opposite doors.

"You must have been sleeping, Brother Dominick," said Ansel, curtly. "I would recommend more quiet, and it is nearly time for the daily walk."

"I will order them for the walk at once; do you go, brother? the noise of the young men is to be attributed to my inattention," said Dominick, meekly.

Ansel nodded and left the room; and the exemplary janitor, who had stood glaring on the pupils, said peevishly, "Oh, you're here, father! the young men made such unseemly noise for this sacred place, that I supposed there was no one here to govern them."

"None of your business to come," muttered the Spaniard aside.

"The lads will be more prone to silence at our age, Brother Ambrose," said Dominick, with much gentleness; "laughter is natural to youth."

"It hurts my feelings in this sacred house," said Ambrose.

"This is heaven, and you's Saint Peter with the keys," whispered the Irishman to a friend, as Dominick marshalled them two and two for their walk. They filed from the room, Dominick bringing up the rear of the march. At the front-door Father Ansel waited with cocked-hat and cane. Ambrose with a groan unlocked the door, with another groan set wide the gate, and the pupils were conducted up the street. The boys nearest Father Ansel and those close to Dominick were constrained to silence, or perfectly correct conversation; but some half dozen had conceived a delightful plot of mischief and had managed to get themselves in the centre of the line, where they had better opportunity for an exchange of ideas.

These six were the Breton, the Irishman, the Italian, the Spaniard, and two Americans.

"I should think, Jacques, that your conscience would reproach you for neglect of ancestral observances," said one.

"Indeed," replied the Breton, "I have a good will to keep the Festival of the Ass."

"Tradition is the foundation of our Church, the holy fathers are the fountains of knowledge, we should never despise the antique, the older a form is the more likely it is to be correct. What a pity to reject the Festival of the Ass!" said the Italian.

"It is the practice of Jacques' fatherland, and our duty of hospitality to help him continue it," said a jolly young American.

"Faith it's myself is ready to observe it," said the Irishman.

"The vestment-room would be such a good place."

"The old altar, that was removed from the oratory, is in a closet there."

"We can have the boy that brings the vegetables bring us some candles on the sly."

"And he owns a jackass, the very beast we want, and we can manage to get it."

"Next week Thursday is our college feast-day, and we shall have no evening lessons. Let us then celebrate the Festival of the Ass."

"It will be so noisy, we shall be found out."

After so many remarks this one came from Jacques.

"Who cares, they cannot kill us, and it will be fun to raise a row. I am absolutely spoiling for a fight. I wish I were in Italy this minute—so I could fight. I'd be on either side," said the Italian.

"There'll be fight enough if they catch us, as they surely will," said the Breton, shrugging his shoulders.

"Let 'em; who's afraid?" said young America.

Though priests and monks are ever watching, playing the spy and reporting each other, these lads their pupils had still the boy clanship, the contempt of a tale-bearer and a sneak, and in their own set they placed entire confidence in each other.

"Jacques, you see the grocer's boy and strike a bargain for that ass—the boy's a Frenchman, one of Brother Dominick's pets," said the Irishman.

"Yes," returned the Breton with a grimace, "he's a good boy too, and won't do it."

"He can be bought—anybody can," said the Italian, whose domestic and religious training had cherished this foul belief.

"I have no money," said Jacques.

"I'll give you a half-eagle," said the American. "What good is money to us here? We cannot buy what we like, and we're all sick of gambling when we can't use our winnings."

"We'll wear our gowns and surplices," said the Spaniard.

"And, Jacques, if the boy will bring the beast to the gate on Thursday at Vespers, I'll get it in. He has only to ride the ass along under the wall and sing Marseillaise," said the Italian.

Father Ansel having stopped and allowed several pairs of boys to pass him, now demanded "What is all this talking about?"

"We discuss who first said mass," replied the representative of Italy.

"Ah, a good theme! and who was it?"

"We are not decided," said the countryman and namesake of the wily Ferdinand.

"It is such a hard question," added the Breton.

"Well, you may prepare yourselves for that point for eight o'clock recitation, Monday morning." And knowing from his own spirit that outward devotion was not to be trusted, Father Ansel returned to the head of the procession, chuckling inwardly.

What the boys called the vestment-room, was one room and a closet apart from the other building, devoted to the tarnished and worn out paraphernalia of church and priests. Here were stored all that was considered too sacred to be cast away, and yet not fine enough for exponents of a creed dependent so largely upon pomp and show for its hold upon the multitude.

Few ever went there save to add one more relic to the general assortment. When one of the pupils asked permission to use the place to practice intoning —an important part of their business in which they were lamentably deficient—the authority in the case being unsuspecting Dominick, they quickly obtained their request; and resorting to the room betimes, three of them intoned loudly while the other three procured from the old treasures a metal basin, an altar, ornaments and a missal. Thither they stealthily conveyed a half-pound of candles, which they cut into lengths and fastened to the altar with melted grease. Matches were in readiness, things were well in train, and on the evening of the feast-day nothing was wanting but the ass and the barley. Even Ansel was beguiled by the distressed face with which the Italian came to him, Vespers being just begun, and begged to be excused on the plea of severe cramp. The cramp ceased to contort the acolyte as soon as he passed out of sight of priestly eyes. He stealthily drew near the gate, locked to be sure, but with the porter's keys in the lock, for the boys being all under age and sent there by parents and guardians, there was small fear of their designing an escapade. Hearing the familiar notes of the Marseillaise outside, the Italian hastily opened the gate, and waived his hand for the "garçon" to draw near. To avoid ob-

servation he closed the gate while he asked the boy a question or two; then opened it again, received the barley and the ass, and turning the key led his prize to the closet of the vestment-room, which was easily done unobserved, as the high walls and buildings kept the yard dark and the room was in the rear, fortunately far from Ambrose the devout, who soon came with dignity from service to the lodge.

One by one, with varied excuses, the boys stole after supper to their rendezvous. Hither, to increase the jollity, they had smuggled a sheet of ginger-bread and six bottles of ginger-pop, and before they produced the quadruped which they had met to honor, they proceeded to regale themselves.

It was a singular scene—the delighted faces of the boys, the faint flickering light of the tallow-candles, the dusty moth-eaten garments swayed by truant airs against the wall. Alb, maniple and stole, violet, crimson, dingy, white and tarnished tinsel—censers, basins, cruets, water-pots along the floor — towels, altar veils, cast-off robes from the images, cracked flower-pots, rheumatic tongs, bent chafing-dishes, dilapidated missals — the débris of years—and glaring grimly from a distant corner a Holy Virgin with a broken head, and a Saint Joseph armless from an encounter with the janitor's broom. Amid such weird surroundings the

lads ate homely cake and drank "pop" with juvenile gusto.

The Italian then placed himself on the "epistle side" of the altar; on his left stood the Breton with the barley; on the right the Spaniard, their song interleaved in the missal and ready to lead off the music.

The Irishman and the Americans led the ass from the closet to the outside of the vestment-room door. Thus far he went peaceably enough, but with asinine stupidity preferred the outer darkness to the flare of the candles, and would not come in.

The boys finally seized him by head and legs and dragging him in shut the door.

"He needs housings," said one American, and the other in his haste to supply the deficiency rushed into the closet and returned with a frayed white and scarlet satin chasuble.

"Mount him and hurry along," they said. Straightway,

> "Paddy leapt
> Upon the creature's back and plied
> With ready heel his shaggy side."

This mild form of moral suasion prevailed upon the ass, and he paced slowly up the room until he came into the circle of light, when, seeing the barley, he sprang forward unexpectedly, and the unguarded rider

fell over his head into the basin held by the Breton, causing the loss of half the precious food and bruising his own nose. After such vicious deeds of Seignor Ass, the Italian's benediction and eulogy were slightly inappropriate. All went safely until the singing. The ass, robed in a chasuble and venerated before an altar, should have showed appreciation, but no sign was given,

"Only the Ass with motion dull
Upon the pivot of his skull,
Turned round his long left ear."

Losing all hesitation the boys sung louder the second verse of their song—thus

"He was born on Shechem's hill
In Reuben's vales he fed his fill,

(Here the barley was administered)

"He drank of Jordan's sacred stream,
And gamboled in Bethlehem."

Uproarious was then the chorus

"Now, Seignor Ass, a noble bray—
At large your beauteous mouth display—
Abundant food our hay-lofts yield,
And oats sufficient load the field:—
He haw, he haw, he haw."

The ass was roused to emulation, and one of the Americans seizing the propitious moment to grasp

the poor beast's tasseled tail and give it a wrench, he brayed both loud and long, the discordant clamor shaking the cobwebby rafters of the vestment-room, and clanging among relics that had been used to a finer style of intoning.

Hardly had this sudden braying ceased and one of the Americans designing a repetition of it touched the tail as a key-note again, when the door burst open and Fathers Ansel, Arnholm and Dominick dashed in, accompanied by Ambrose the devout three college servitors and a tutor.

Ansel and Arnholm blazed with fury, like Nebuchadnezzar's furnace heated seven times hotter than ever before. They rushed forward calling the servitors to follow, and each collared a boy and delivered him into custody, while Dominick more mildly laid his hand on the Breton's arm and bade him retire to the sacristy. Ansel seized in his hand a crosier which having passed its best days had been left in a corner of the vestment-room. Having made one captive, he turned part of his rage against the ass and gave it a heavy kick. Just then he caught the eye of the Spaniard fixed on him with an expression quite the reverse of respect, and carried away by passion he sprang at him and struck him with the crosier.

For centuries Spaniards have been subservient to

He brayed both loud and long.

Almost a Priest. **Page 172.**

Rome; but years in a free land had revived in this youth the fiery spirit of his Castilian ancestors who had lifted Ferdinand and Isabella to the throne. He could not brook a blow, and seizing the emblem of office from Ansel's hand he flung it across the room.

"He despises the most holy cross!" cried Ambrose, and springing forward caught him by the throat and might have strangled him, had not the tall Italian come to the rescue, and taking the head of devout Ambrose in his hands knocked it unscrupulously against the wall. Three boys had already been conducted to the sacristy, and after a few moments' melee, the other three were sent thither also. Ambrose picked up the crosier, kissed it, wiped it on his coat-tail and laid it away, removed the candles from the altar, affected to weep over the desecration of that piece of furniture, and darkness and silence at last reigning in the vestment-room, he grasped poor trembling Seignor Ass by the ear, dragged him to the gate and dismissed him to the street with such a vengeful kick that three tremendous brays straightway woke the echoes on the evening air.

Side by side went Ansel and Dominick to the sacristy, to question and condemn to varied penances the offenders, Ansel bitterly to do the worst he might, to demand to the full the pound of flesh, but

Dominick, taught compassion by what he had suffered, Portia-like, to plead the cause of mercy.

"Truly," said Dominick, as they took their way through the darkness, passing here and there a gleam of light from the windows, "our Ambrose seems very devout."

"Bah," said Ansel, who being less charitable might be a better judge of the dark side of human nature.

CHAPTER VII.

DOMINICK AND ANSEL.

FINING the culprits who had been guilty of festival keeping extraordinary to the amount of half a year's pocket money each; giving them twenty prayers from the Raccolta to learn, and to repeat morning and evening for three months, and lastly sentencing them to do penance barefooted and with candles in hand before the church altar on a day of entire abstinence from food or drink, seemed to the boys to be full settlement of their flagrant crime of burlesque. On the minds of the priests it left a deeper impression, and Ansel regarded the Spaniard with a vindictive hatred, likely to last at least the natural term of his life.

About a week after the excitement in the vestment-room several young men were consecrated as priests in Father Arnholm's Church of the Madonna. The bishop preached a sermon on the occasion from the text that the Levite should say "unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own chil-

dren." It was a very clever discourse, considering that it came from a bishop. On the first clause, he showed that the filial tie was inconsiderable, trifling and easily broken, and that the greater part of the tie was absorbed by the holy Church. As an ordinary man was to leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, so that extraordinary man, a priest, was to leave his father and mother and cleave unto the Church. The discussion of the next point was calculated to be very comforting to Father Arnholm on that little matter of his starved sister—that is if he had any regard for the prelate's deduction. From the last clause the bishop argued that, as the Levitical priest was to have no parental interest in or affection for his children, so the Romish priest, advanced to a higher plane of consecration, was to have no parental relationship.

After the service, Ansel, Arnholm and Dominick being in Father Arnholm's parlor to discuss Church matters, "How did you like the sermon?" asked Ansel of Dominick.

"Very good," said the old monk. "I was pleased to see that the Levitical priesthood was almost entirely like the Catholic—only the children—we have none at all."

"Not as a general thing," said Ansel, maliciously, and with a wink. Arnholm laughed.

"Oh, my brother, my brother, why to a heart of holiness will you add lips of folly!" cried Dominick, tears rushing to his mild gray eyes. "The holy priesthood should be sacred even from an idle word."

"And what sort of a holy priest is that rascal of a Spaniard going to make do you think, who threw the crosier across the room? He ought to have had his right hand cut off."

"He is young and foolish—he will improve," said Dominick, the mild.

"I'll wager anything," said Father Arnholm, paring an apple, quartering it, and feeding himself with the portions stuck on his knife-blade, "that those young scoundrels have all at one time or another been to those hot-beds of wickedness, the public schools. If there's anything I loathe and hate, it is a public school. If I had my way I'd wipe every one of them from the face of the country—and until that is done there is no hope of our Church in this land."*

"I don't go with you there," said Ansel. "I see plainly that if we can get the Bible out of those schools and Catholic teachers in, the schools would soon be turned entirely to our purposes, and be our help rather than our hindrance."

* For these views even more broadly and violently expressed, see "Catholic Telegraph."

"You would have to remodel them, get in the catechism and our own school-books, and cut down the range of studies, which is too broad, and develops the young out of the idea of unquestioning obedience. There's too much education in this country."

"Get out the Bible, get in the sisters to teach, and that would all follow," said Ansel. "Bah, what a land this is to live in! Give me France, give me Austria, give me Italy—or America fifty years hence—but not a country where there is such a petting of schools and such an outcry if one lays a finger on them. What do you say, Brother Dominick? Speak to the point."

Ansel was quizzing the monk as usual; but Dominick was moved beyond himself, to speak his secret thoughts, hardly realizing the force of what he said—

"You are right—yes, truly, brother, you must be—yet we are forced to admit that in the countries you mention there is a great excess of crime over this country. Naples is the most criminal place in any Christian land; France may rank next in order to the Italian states, unless Bavaria exceeds her;—I am not versed in statistics—I speak from observation;—Austria is bad; Tuscany is worse; and in these countries there are no public schools. Perhaps the schools may not have such an effect here as you suppose, and

if the schools are not evil the reading of the Bible has had no damaging effect. Well, well, brothers, maybe I am speaking unadvisedly!"

"I should think you were," said Ansel; "why, man! that is rank heresy!"

"Oh no, not for the world, never, never!" said Dominick.

"It is—do you teach that sort of stuff?" asked Arnholm.

"Never, never; I do not trust my own feeble judgments; I offer my boys no private opinion, I speak only the deliverances of the holy Church; thus I am sure of being right."

"Oh, well then," said Arnholm, knowing that Dominick's word could be entirely trusted, "I don't see as your opinions make any difference. So you keep them to yourself, and teach the views of the Church, it's no matter whether you believe exactly right or not."

"Oh yes, it is; it is great difference to me; I want to be right; if as you tell me these views are wrong, I must not entertain them."

"There, you see, you were brought up without any public school, and you yield to authority, but these rascals in the college have minds of their own," said Arnholm, "and the worst of it is that public opinion here interferes in some measure with even

the workings of our Order—we are not half as severe as we ought to be—those boys were not half punished."

"No," said Ansel; "we ought to have applied the laws of the code of Draco."

"What is that?" asked Dominick.

"In other words the code of the Jesuits."

"I never heard of the code of Draco before," said the monk.

"It was a code that judged the least offence worthy of death; and, as no heavier punishment was possible for higher crimes, death was the penalty of every infraction of law."

"And our code is so too," said Dominick, meditatively.

The corners of Arnholm's mouth made a sudden raid upon his ears and withdrew from the charge as suddenly. He knew that before Dominick's mental vision floated the gloom, the dampness, the loneliness of a dungeon, and the slow decade that there had rolled away, but the thought that Dominick had such a memory was not unpleasing to Arnholm—misfortune of other men was a sweet morsel under his tongue.

"Do you not see the similarity between Draco's code and ours?" asked Ansel. "Do we not read that disobedience is death, hesitation is death, honest

doubt is death.* By that law, my dear Brother Dominick, you are condemned already."

Dominick looked uneasily about, and the gray-white of his face blanched a little.

"Never fear," said Ansel, "we are not disposed to carry on the matter to extremities."

"No, we will be merciful—for all we have the honor of having founded the Inquisition." †

"Arnholm, ring for Kitty—this brandy's out and I'm fearfully thirsty—intoning is an abomination to my throat—last Sunday I was forced—"

Ansel stopped, it would never do to say "to drink a glass or so of brandy before high mass," so he said "nearly to kill myself at mass—just missed a double sacrifice, you see, as there is a double atonement.‡

Dominick fairly groaned with horror at this speech.

Arnholm rang for Kitty, gave his order, and pulling a dish of nuts toward him cracked one or two, and then putting his thumb in the cracker closed it gingerly. "Not so bad as a thumb-screw—suppose we have the pleasure of trying that on these Yankees some day?" he said.

"Not a very republican institution," said Ansel. "Ah, Kitty, here you are!"

*See "Loyola and Jesuits." †Ranke 1, p. 74.

‡See Month of Mary, p. 150.

There was the ripple of brandy into the glasses.

"We priests do not profess to be republican," said Arnholm; "but that priest at Northville is a republican, he is indeed."

Ansel laughed uproariously. "Hear that, Dominick? Ought he to be a republican? The word is an abomination."

"I trust we are all Christians," said Dominick, mindful of "thumb-screws."

"Republican or democrat, what difference?" said Arnholm. "Both are foreign in their principles to our intentions. Republicanism is incontestably anti-Catholic; and, on the other hand, democracy supposes men capable of self-government, which they are *not*—such a supposition is odious and abominable, and a flagrant contradiction of our doctrines and rights.* Yes, and for all we cry 'Democracy' they'll find some day that when the holy Church and democracy come into conflict the Church will not be the power to give way."†

"I do not understand politics, and I had better go back to the college," said Dominick, rising.

"No, no, stay until I go, two are better than one going home dark nights," said Ansel, holding on to the monk's gown.

Dominick patiently sat down.

*See "Tablet" of N. Y. †Ibid.

"How did you like my sermon on the seven sacraments?" said Arnholm.

"It was a very learned discourse, brother."

"What do you think I heard that Italian saying in the refectory about it?" said Ansel. "Said he, if marriage is a sacrament, why not permit the priests to indulge in it? are they holier than the sacraments?"

"I'm afraid the holy Church is in great danger," said Dominick, "if our lads talk so recklessly of things too high for them."

"Seven sacraments! ha, ha, seven sacraments," said Arnholm, scoffingly, and again he rang his bell. Once more came Kitty.

"You and grandmother," said Arnholm, keeping up the pleasant little illusion about the housekeeper, "bring us some supper,—the castor, a box of sardines, a plate of biscuits. Is cook out?"

"No sir."

"Tell her to make some hot punch."

Kitty vanished, and the master of the household put his feet on the back of a chair, yawned and waited.

As priests must eat and drink like other men, as they must live in houses, have beds made, carpets swept and clothes mended, and as these are feminine avocations which no man that has yet been discovered

can properly perform, it seems to me that priests ought to marry and thus have some one to superintend their domestic life without fear and without reproach. It is a question worthy of public consideration. It is a question which some of the most enlightened minds in the Romish Church have decided in the affirmative. It is a question which Victor Emanuel has settled in his own dominions so far as he can. And here is a single other question:—*If Protestant clergymen as a body vowed themselves to celibacy, and then insisted upon having houses and supporting domestic establishments like other people, would there not be—not to put too fine a point upon it—great room for remarks?*

The supper was brought in, and Arnholm invited his guests to draw near, as he filled glasses with punch. Ansel drew up with alacrity and proceeded to help himself. Dominick shook his head, saying, "I am neither hungry nor thirsty," turned about his chair and looked into the grate, softly whispering to himself a fragment of an epistle, "not in rioting and drunkenness."

Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Can a clean thing come out of an unclean? The Romish system is foully corrupt, and yet by God's mercy there have been found in its membership some gracious souls. Dear Father Dominick! verily he was a gentle, hum-

ble, honest man! Even in Jesuitism, the most intolerable creed under which earth ever groaned, God is not left without a witness. In all ages Rome has had some such as Dominick, and some with more powerful minds and no less piety, who have left the weariness and darksome mazes of their perverted creed, their cowls and their albs, their cinctures and their stoles, to go up and stand white-robed before the throne of Christ. Such thy lot, Dominick. This poor man's God had found him in a desert land; he had met him wounded, oppressed and poor, fainting in the way, smitten with a sore disease, and he had borne him and comforted him as a mother soothes her child. The cripple healed at Bethesda knew not that it was Jesus who had healed him, but when he found him in the temple then his eyes were opened, and he worshiped him, no more in type and shadow but face to face. So when Dominick finds Jesus in the upper temple, he shall know his Lord, and shall adore him with none to come between. As yet Dominick does not know that the peace and tenderness in his heart are external to his creed, a something nobler than is held by his brother priests, a special work of the Holy Spirit, binding him to Jesus as an only and ever present Saviour.

Our story lingers. After so long delays, it is yet only the Lent following Philip's entrance to the col-

lege. The Seven Sorrows and the House of Charity have not yet had their fair, nor has Northville been enlivened by the strawberry festival. It is Lent, and Father Arnholm preaches daily, discoursing on the "Twelve Stations" of the cross. It must not be concluded that he was going through any arduous mental labor; he had twelve sermons on the Stations, which he had collected from various fathers in the first year of his priesthood, and he had used them regularly at every Lent since; he was pretty well acquainted with them by this time, and so would his people have been, if they had made any practice of paying attention.

To express how Father Arnholm actually regarded the Stations, we can pervert Wordsworth's sketch of Peter Bell and a primrose:

> "Those Stations hung in twilight dim,
> Poor painter's daubings were to him,
> And they were nothing more!"

He passed from one delineation to another, wondering how in the world anything so ugly had ever been perpetrated, and seeing never the God-man burdened with the weight of our iniquities. He had been preaching on the fifth station very fluently, his admiring flock had said, and when the church was emptied, he came out upon the steps putting on his

gloves. His buggy stood near the sidewalk, a small boy was holding the horse's head. The holy father, glad his task was done, stood looking up and down the street, a jaunty, reckless air developing even through the robes and cocked-hat. This air suddenly changed when he perceived that his horse had been permitted to rub and injure the harness against the iron hitching-post, and he came down from his elevation three steps at a time, collared the boy, shook him, boxed his ears, and when he had thus reduced him to temporary idiocy condescended to explain whereof he accused him, and with a parting tweak of the lad's hair got into his buggy and drove away frowning blackly.

> "Some decent in demeanor while they preach,
> That task performed relapse into themselves,
> And having spoken wisely, at the close
> Grow wanton, and give proof to every eye,
> Whoever was edified, themselves were not!"

Down the great thoroughfare drove the priest, stopping here and there; and having alighted, he was just getting into the vehicle again, when he was detained by a portly person, the great man of the Church of the Madonna. This portly person made a most important communication, to which the priest listened politely for a few words, and the injury to the harness was buried in oblivion—a few more, and

the priest's mouth widened to its pleasantest wont, invading the legitimate domains of the ears, and displaying the double row of strong white teeth—yet more words, and under downcast lids Father Arnholm's eyes were turning golden with the miser's joy, and I had almost said the yellow light touched as with sunset his brown, high-boned cheeks.

This informer stated that the congregation of the Church of the Madonna, with the "Seven Sorrows," and "House of Charity" were about to present on Easter-day a token of their love to their revered priest, and that, as became the occasion, the gift was a goodly service of silver—solid silver—the best they could procure—casually dropping the remark also, that it was worth fifteen hundred dollars. No wonder that Father Arnholm rejoiced, expressed himself as flattered, honored and grateful, and finally shaking hands warmly, sprang into his seat and drove away with head erect, eyes shining, and heart swelling with pride and gratified avarice.

It was Lent, as we have told you, and not only Lent but Friday. As Father Arnholm drove toward home, he held the reins with one hand while the other was ostentatiously occupied carrying a brown paper parcel, from which depended the tail of that Romish fast-day delicacy, a salmon-trout; but we regret to be obliged to state also, that a narrow

inspection of the back of the buggy would have revealed the elegant proportions of a leg of mutton carefully covered and hidden from the public eye.

Lying before Arnholm now was one great day, the day on which he should take possession of his silver, and to that day he would willingly go at a bound, losing the time that lay between. How Ansel would gnaw his envious lip! Even the bishop had never received such a splendid token of esteem from the churches in that city. How would poor old Dominick look and wonder! Arnholm prepared a delightful speech suitable to that bright event, and hoped and fancied and waited, until at length the weariness of Lent was over, the sun danced on Easter morning, and Father Arnholm's heart danced too—children broke gaudy Easter eggs, and Father Arnholm walked as if he walked on eggs, from the jubilant lightness of his heart.

The day came—auspicious day! Before the admiring crowd the presentation was made, with many flourishing expressions of love, admiration, respect, and the like. Upon the large oval of the silver tray six tall, silver, gold-lined goblets gleamed, a gold-lined pitcher lorded it over the goblets, a sugar-basin, bowl, ladle and spoons glittered attractively, and gave promise of good cheer to come.

When all was over, when all had been said and done and admired, Ambrose the devout, who was lingering in the aisle, was one of those called to carry the treasure into the priest's adjacent house. When Ambrose, with both careful hands, lifted the laden salver and looked down into the golden depths of the utensils, we cannot say that as in Judas of old the devil entered into him, but he felt suddenly as if that shining burden had entered into his pockets, and wings were on his feet. He felt thus all day, when he was plodding about the college and while he knew very well that the silver had taken its appropriate station on Father Arnholm's black-walnut sideboard. It was a singular sensation and Ambrose dreamed of it; he read of it in his prayer-book; it stuck to his fingers as he told off his rosary; it winked to him from the virgin's hitherto unflinching eyes, and seemed whispered by holy Joseph's moveless lips; it followed him day after day. But Lent was passed, and business pressed him.

Up and down through college, lodge, garden, and church, went Ambrose the devout, more devout than ever, dipping his fingers oftener than before in holy water, yet never washing away the tingling pleasure thrilled through them by the gold and silver burden he had carried into Father Arnholm's house. Longer each day he knelt as if praying; but instead of pray-

ers strange fearful thoughts crowded his soul, and were not fought against and banished, but were dwelt upon, courted and cherished, until to heaven's clear challenge Ambrose the devout might well have answered "my name is Legion for we are many."

And now Ambrose became apparently very active in duties for his Church. He must look after stray sheep and ravening wolves, and he went out often professedly on such errands. He told rare tales of arguments he had held, of wavering minds he had established in the faith, of converts he was likely to secure, and by these narrations won high eulogiums from the students. Moreover, he hinted darkly of hatred he had excited, of threats against his poor life, and of the glory of the martyr's crown.

Ambrose had in fact abundant business abroad; but it was personal and private. Some of it lay at the wharves, questioning of the coming and going of the ships, some at a shop where he bought queer second-hand garments and a strong blue box such as seamen use, and some at a miserable den close by the docks where jolly tars just after pay-day are beguiled and fleeced. At this last resort he held confidential interviews with a hang-dog rascal, with a scarred face, and shambling gait that ball and chain had often impeded, whose whole air as he drank the brandy Am-

brose bought for him proclaimed that the devil had not yet collected all his dues, but had here one account at interest still.

One evening Ambrose called to see Father Arnholm, and, while Kitty (who opened the door) went to inquire if he should be admitted, he modestly turned his back to the hall and was lost in a devout contemplation of the door-lock.

"Come in," said Kitty, and in went Ambrose bowing low—and in the most humble manner explained that he had a duty to perform—he hoped it was no offence—but he was deeply grieved over the sins of Patriok and Mary Connor, who were disobedient to the holy Church, and leading all Gabrielle street astray.

"Were they holding Bible readings and prayer-meetings again?" roared Father Arnholm.

"Very like—there was a rich heretic lady, Miss Vaughn, from Northville, spending the winter in the city—Mary Connor had lived with her once—and now this same heretic lady was beguiling the innocence of the children of the Church, reading that wicked book the Bible, and getting some children together to question and teach many heresies and blasphemies, even to think of which greatly hurt the feelings of Ambrose the devout.

"Thank you, Ambrose—you have done the Church

a service—I shall look to this. Stay, Ambrose, will you go to the kitchen and have something to eat?"

Ambrose declined—"It was growing late, he had enemies, he would be safe in his lodge, did not always feel safe on the street."

"Pull the bell-cord for Kitty to let you out."

"So much attention was needless,"—Ambrose could let himself out—he knew the way—"good-evening to his reverence:"—and then Ambrose went to the hall, took hold of the wrong part of the door first, then righted himself, went out, banged the door after him, and stumbled down the steps with studied noise. But who is this, on stealthy foot, that creeps up the steps, softly opens the door—whereof mysteriously the dead-latch is not down—gains the hall, puts the latch down, and in ghost-like quiet, learned at the House of Charity, slips into the chill darkness and silence of the great drawing-room—is lost in the shadow—but followed by spirit-eyes might have been found crouched behind a costly high-backed sofa, and so quite concealed?

The clock chimes eleven, the voices of housekeeper, cook and Kitty, are hushed in sleep. Father Arnholm in gown and slippers idles through his house, sees that the doors are locked, turns off the gas, throws open the door between his bedroom and sitting-room which adjoin, and begins to undress;—then

takes a small lamp, crosses the hall, thrusts priestly head into the drawing-room, the lamp illu ining the room and his hard face together, s that all is right, and goes back to bed. The h father keeps a jet of gas burning low in his b chamber, and the crimson glow from his parlor-falls full on his silver service standing at night o table near his bed's head. His couch is soft, his lows are laced, the blankets are the finest, and quilts of silk. Straight on his back, he soon slee his arms dropping listlessly outside the covers, hard face growing a little softer in sleep and in subdued light.

Unseen by watchmen, the villainous accompl from the den by the docks slips into the yard of priest's house and crouches in the darkness under side window of the parlor. After a time, the fig behind the sofa rises up, opens doors and turns h dles deftly, and noiselessly as his own pursui shadow enters the bedroom. Verily it is Ambro the devout, who in midnight stillness now lays fi grasp on either side of that salver which he has c ried once before. Plunder is his only object—the m ner of the deed not over-well defined—but now it fearfully complicated; for all unexpectedly the sle er's eyes open wide, and are fixed on the intrude face, with a dreamy half-somnolent gaze. Ambro

looking at the priest as he grasped his prey, saw the eyes fly open, and at once the instinct of self-preservation awoke in him. Those opened eyes pronounced his ruin. At a leap, before the mists of dreams could clear away and the priest arouse to action, Ambrose flung himself upon him, dragging the unused pillow over his victim's face, and crowding it down with all his might to stifle every sound. Father Arnholm was a strong man, but he was taken at a disadvantage. Ambrose pressed one knee into the chest of the prostrate priest, held down with the other one of his arms, grasped fiercely his left hand, and with arm, shoulders, head, and bull-dog neck, forced the process of suffocation by means of the pillow.

It was a fearful struggle—all the more fearful for being soundless. The priest fought for life with desperate energy; but a mortal fear of the consequences which would befall him if unsuccessful, urged Ambrose to equally desperate efforts to finish the fell work he had begun. Gradually the writhing and resistance ceased under his weight; but even then he delayed, afraid to stir. At last he lifted himself a little—the priest's hands were livid and chill, the nails purple—slowly he raised the pillow—the blood had settled darkly about his victim's eyes and mouth, the nose was pinched, between the white teeth the stiffened

tongue protruded—certainly Father Arnholm was dead. Ambrose must fly the spot; but not without the booty which had cost him so dear. He was more deliberate now; he took a large woolen table-cover and tied up his plunder; he took the priest's pocket-book and also successfully explored the secretary for money; then he looked at the bed to see if his horrid work was complete, and—ah! the eyelids quivered, the throat worked, the broad chest trembled:—too late now for Ambrose to hesitate—the priest must die or must live to denounce and destroy him;—with cruel fingers (fingers which had been dipped so often in holy water) Ambrose grasped that twitching throat and grasped it closely—he would make no mistakes this time—and he set his teeth and the big drops caused by horror and remorse rolled over his brow, and his face was whiter than the awful face beneath him—and still his fingers grasped and clutched in their despair until he fully believed his victim was dead. Then he took up his fatal burden and staggered away, not out of the door but out of the side window, unscrewing the shutter-fastenings to make it seem that the robber and murderer had entered there.

The accomplice who had waited helped him, and went with him to the den where his blue box was in readiness. There Ambrose dressed himself in

the queer second-hand clothing, paid his coadjutor and went on board a vessel that he had found the previous day.

When the East was ruddy with the coming morning, Ambrose the devout and his ill-gotten booty were far out at sea.

Slowly the night slipped by in that invaded bedchamber. With morning came Kitty to make the fire in the parlor grate, and kneeling on the hearth, her task nearly accomplished, she just then discovered the window half-raised, the shutters tampered with, and other evidences of burglary.

"Mother of angels, we're robbed!" cried Kitty, as she sprang from the floor and rushed to the bedroom, whereof the door was closed but not latched. "Oh, Mr. Arnholm, will ye—"

Kitty had the door open now and confronted the ghastly spectacle on the bed. Shriek after shriek brought housekeeper, cook and pot-boy — wilder shrieks at the front-door called policemen and neighbors in.

"He's dead! he's murdered! he's gone!" yelled Kitty.

"Oh, you fool, bring me help!" said the housekeeper, who was bending over the bed, scrutinizing the fearful marks upon the throat and feeling for the lost pulse—"I believe there's a twittering at his

heart yet—help me everybody—maybe we can bring him to!"

There was much excitement at the college that day. The pupils said that cruel Protestants had murdered the great priest of the Church of the Madonna—and holy Ambrose the janitor was missing—he too must be a prey to heretic vengeance, and hourly the boys expected to see his gory corpse carried in "done to death" with daggers, a martyr to the Catholic Truth.

Nurses and surgeons stood about the priest hour after hour, until at length the slow blood began to move along the veins, the swollen tongue drew back within the teeth, the cruelly used lungs filled feebly and painfully. Out of the region and shadow of death, they brought him by tardy advances during the next three days, and when at last the priest's voice could whisper through the bruised throat, when the eyelids lifted to the light of day, when the stiff purple hands regained the softness and color of life, he told them—oh wonderful revelation! —that Ambrose the devout, that humble votary of the saints, that true son of the Church, that active enemy of all heresy, had come in the night time to rob and murder his benefactor and his priest! Oh, shameful truth! In his cell good Brother Dominick wept bitter tears over the janitor's crime. Along the

line of pupils marshaled for their daily walk, passed whispers—"So much for extra holiness!" "So much for Ambrose the devout!"

"I wouldn't give a fig for piety," said the Spaniard.

"The age of holiness is gone by," said the Italian.

"And what shall we do?" asked Philip, astounded.

"Uphold the Church and preach her doctrines, for there is our bread and butter—be Catholics, for that is our business—but, bah for piety—piety is a relic of the dark ages—piety is dead."

CHAPTER VIII.

A VOCATION.

WHEN June's festal roses crowned the earth, Father Arnholm was so far recovered as to be able to make his accustomed rounds in the city once more, but his precious silver seemed an irrecoverable loss, and he had with loud and deep anathemas doomed Ambrose to eternal destruction. At the college, the excitement caused by the appearance of the devout janitor in the role of Othello with additions was dying away.

The roses bloomed, the fragrance of blushing fruit crept out of the green leaves of the strawberry beds, and the festival was held at Northville. For this festival Viola was aglow with enthusiasm, but Magdalen, when asked to take a table or lend her aid, excused herself.

"Why do you decline, darling?" asked Mrs. Courcy, looking up from a study of the last fashions.

"Because I am a Courcy," said Magdalen, proudly.

"The last of your race, and worthy of it," said

her mother, fondly. "But why does that cause you to refuse?"

"Do you want me to turn Catholic?" asked Magdalen.

"Turn Catholic! It is impossible that you should. No Courcy has been a Catholic for many generations. Your ancestors, as I have often told you, fought beside Henry of Navarre for religious liberty in France. In this country they have been strong Protestants. Your great-grandfather built a church, your grandfather did the same, and, as I have often remarked to you, your father nearly supported this church, and presented it with a communion service of solid silver."

"After all that good example," said Magdalen, "I shall beware of the beginnings of evil, and not be enticed by Romanism. I have been carried away somewhat by the nun-excitement here; but I see that they are doing a very bad work in Viola; I have talked to Miss Judith, and my mind is made up. The spirit of the Huguenots is strong in me, mother!"

Mrs. Courcy looked with swelling heart on the beautiful face, the kindling eyes, and the high bearing of her only child.

"Your father grieved very much that you were not a boy, Magdalen. I always told him you were better than ten sons, and I am sure if he were living he would say so now," she said.

"You are over-fond of me, mamma," said Magdalen. "As to religion, I know that there is as much in Protestantism as in Romanism, and more. Where can you find among Catholics such a woman as Judith Vaughn, who *lives* religion without ostentation, without hypocrisy, without fanaticism—lives it generously and beautifully every day?"

"But I dare say the nuns are very devout."

"They are devout with the devoutness of ignorance and of stunted intellects; they are devout in passive obedience, every act ruled, guarded and assigned them by somebody else; but not devout with a strong mind, an honest heart, and an unfettered will, like Judith Vaughn!"

"And will your anti-Romanism, like Judith's, bid you remain at home and not attend the festival?"

"I really do not care to go," replied Magdalen.

"Nor I; so that is settled. But how about visiting the sisters? Don't be extreme in anything, my dear."

"I shall visit them—they are friendly, and I have no hereditary grudge against them if I have against the Church—besides, I want to watch over Viola."

"Her fancy for a religious life will die away, as she gets out into society," said Mrs. Courcy. "She will see it is wisest and pleasantest to marry and have a home of her own."

"Maybe so," said Magdalen, "but you have no idea what an influence Sister Mary Angela has over her, mother—she is perfectly fascinated."

"Mrs. Hastings is very much hurt by Viola's perverseness. She shed tears as she talked of it to me the last time I called. I'm thankful enough I never was anybody's stepmother. I might have been—I refused several widowers," said Mrs. Courcy, who was apt to talk of past conquests.

Magdalen smiled. This was a very dear mamma, but she had her weaknesses, and daughter Magdalen could not help seeing them. Daughter Magdalen had heard these remarks about mamma's suitors before, and they always set her in a maze of wonderment about who she herself would have been had mamma made any other matrimonial choice! She was getting into this state of bewilderment again, when mamma asked, "Couldn't you influence Viola, Magdalen?"

"Not in the least against the sisters—Viola always attributes the difference in our feelings to what she calls the difference in our circumstances."

"There is a great difference certainly," said Mrs. Courcy, complacently.

At the festival, besides fruits, flowers, cakes and cream, was that mild form of lottery much in vogue,

notwithstanding its illegality, among churches of all denominations—"the taking of chances" for various vases of wax-flowers, state pincushions, and groups of statuary. Visitors could hardly turn in the "hall" where the festival was in progress, without being solicited to "take a chance for" a cake, a cushion or a mantel ornament. With that paternal carefulness peculiar to the Romish priesthood, Father Arnholm came to Northville to superintend the monetary matters of this festival. The reverend Father smiled grimly at seeing Protestant girls standing at tables with nuns—smiled again when he saw the good-natured Protestants crowding in to the festival to help Holy Mother Church, already rich, to become yet richer—and smiled most of all, when among the names of the faithful he saw long rows of signatures of Protestants who were "taking chances."

The sisters did not confine their business operations to the "hall." Sisters Mary Angela and Josepha went all about the village, liberally giving everybody an opportunity to sign for something. Among other persons they came to Miss Judith Vaughn. She was perfectly courteous, but declined to subscribe.

"All the village ladies have," said Sister Josepha.

"I think these lotteries wrong, I know them to be illegal," said Miss Vaughn, "and it is against my conscience to have any share in them."

"Then," said Sister Mary Angela, blandly, "you can give us something and not sign for a 'chance.'"

"It is also against my conscience to help your Church, because she refuses education to the masses, keeps the Bible from them, and exalts other objects of worship than the one living and true God."

"Madam is mistaken," said Sister Mary Angela.

"Our Church strongly upholds the cause of education, the people are welcome to the Bible, and we worship none but God."

"Can you tell me so, when your churches are full of pictures and images?" asked Judith.

"We do not worship *them;* they are only similitudes to lift our souls to what we really adore," said Josepha.

"But does not the Bible expressly forbid these similitudes in these words:—"Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female?"

"We don't know anything about that," said Josepha.

"You would if you were allowed the Bible, for those words are in it; and the Bible your Church certainly prohibits, for only a month ago I gave a

Bible to a woman here, and to my knowledge the priest snatched it from her hand one day, and the next day threw it in the fire."

"You should not argue with us; we are only women; you should argue with our priest," said Sister Mary Angela, rising.

"And what am I but a woman?" asked Judith, smiling.

"Ah, but Protestant women reason, while Catholic women only believe."

"And your priests have by wisdom or wickedness got where they can reason as well as believe?"

"We made no attack on your faith," said Sister Mary Angela, with an air of injured innocence, "and you should have respected ours,"—and thus she retired triumphant, while Judith Vaughn bit her lip.

"Did you take a chance?" asked Viola, coming in shortly after the sisters departed.

"What good would it have done?" asked Judith. "If you notice, Viola, at all these fairs the prizes are drawn by members of the 'True Church.'"

"I know that the sisters will not be unfair," said Viola, flushing.

"I say nothing about that. I make no charge; but I have mentioned a rule that has rarely an exception. You will see who gets these prizes in this case."

Sure enough, when the festival was over, and the lucky numbers were announced, a long line of O'Shins, MacNamara's and O'Mahon's were possessed of the prizes, and, as the things drawn were unsuitable to their estate in life, the cakes were by them given to be sold at auction for the benefit of the church, the cushions ditto, the waxwork went to the grand altar of the "Church of the Immaculate Mother," and Father Arnholm got the best statuette.

"I told you so!" said Judith Vaughn.

The day after the festival, Mrs. Hastings wanted Viola very much, to aid her in household matters, but Viola was not to be found. Mrs. Hastings concluded that the truant was visiting Magdalen; but she was in fact in the nuns' parlor, sitting near to the closed blinds, on a low hassock, while Father Arnholm was stretched in the large rocking-chair, giving her spiritual advice.

"If you believe the Holy Catholic Church to be the true Church of God, daughter Viola, you do your soul great injury by delaying to express that belief."

"But my family would be so angry," said Viola, in a little flutter of romantic delight.

"Fear not them that kill the body," said Father Arnholm, pompously.

"I'm sure I only want you to tell me my duty," said the infatuated girl.

"You should attend confession, read our books, and be baptized into the True Church."

"I should have no peace of my life at home after that," sighed the would-be martyr.

"That can all be privately attended to, and your family know nothing of it," said the priest.

"But, father, would I not have to be confirmed?"

"At some future time, yes; not immediately."

"And when that time came, you don't know how I would be persecuted at home!"

"Then leave your home!"

"And where should I go, father?"

"Our Church offers asylums to all her children. To you the sacred refuge of the convent would be open."

"Oh, father, do you, do you really think I have a vocation, and might be a nun?"

"Undoubtedly," said the good father—then added,

"If to the convent your whole heart inclines, you must accept that as the divine dictate, and obey by taking the solemn vow. For our own members we generally prefer those to enter holy Orders who can bring to the altar, in humble sacrifice, some offering of worldly wealth to prove their own sincere devotion. You, my dear daughter, coming from another creed, leaving like Ruth your own country and your father's house to follow your new mother the Church

wherever she goes, give proof enough of your fervor in offering up *yourself*."

"Ah," said this easily beguiled damsel, "but I have a little money—only a thousand dollars—which my own mother left me, and when I am of age no one can keep that from me—that at least I can give to the Church."

"My dear daughter shows fervent charity; but has she considered what it is to renounce the world, its hopes, its ambitions, its society, to live in seclusion, silence and poverty as the 'Bride of Christ?'"

The father fully understood the temperament he was dealing with. Viola replied ecstatically, "Oh, but it is such a calm, holy, beautiful life!"

"That is true; but you cannot be ushered at once into those gardens of repose, those heights of serene contemplation. As a teachable, earnest-minded postulant, you must wait at the gate of bliss; as a novice you must be practiced in subduing the flesh, in self-denial and in learning humility by entire obedience; this done, you might indeed reap all the advantages of being the holy child of the Virgin mother, and the beloved spouse of her Son."

"I can do all these things," said Viola, yet more than ever fascinated with the life she desired. "My mind, I think, is fully made up. To live out of the mean cares of household life, out of the misery of

seeing others loved better than one's self and preferred before one, to be where there is no strife, no drudgery, no care, no jealousy, where taste is gratified in the beautiful seclusion, and where only kindred minds are gathered together—this, father, is my ideal life."

As she spoke, the father passed his big hand over his face to hide the bitter smile of sarcasm that curled his lips, and mocked her from his gleaming eyes. Ah, he knew all the beauties of convent life—how Mother Vallé despised Mother Denny and Mother Denny covertly hated Mother Vallé — how those kindred spirits, Sister Pauline Anna and Sister Mary Angela, detested each other—and what sort of social intercourse passed between scores of other saintly sisters. He knew it all; but, true to his Jesuitical creed of concealment and deception, he said, "You are right, my daughter;" and gave her his benediction. It was not because he himself believed that he used such artful effort to make others believe, if only for a fatal initiatory season; but because thus he could secure his bread and butter, make preferment possible, attain higher place and power in the Church, accomplish that for which he had all his life been trained.

Viola went homeward from the "House of Saint Vincent de Paul," rejoicing in the thought of how

she would vindicate her own independence, and assert her own judgment.

Father Arnholm also left the "House of Saint Vincent de Paul," and went to Mrs. Courcy's, where he was really charming, discussing the weather, the season, the city and the scenery in a manner most agreeable and quite unexceptionable. By and by, he remarked that he had not seen Mrs. Courcy and her daughter at the festival.

No, they did not attend, but Mrs. Courcy hoped the sisters had done very well.

Very well, Father Arnholm thanked her. Miss Courcy did not accompany her friend Miss Hastings to Vespers on Sunday; and really, on Sunday morning the Father *had* hoped Miss Courcy would have been there to hear him preach.

"No, really," said Mrs. Courcy, with a little bewitching laugh which years before had carried captive the often-mentioned widowers—and with a little smooth malice in which women of her stamp delight —"Magdalen did not go; Magdalen is a very fierce little Protestant, quite the exponent of Courcy blood and spirit; and the Courcys were always Huguenots, you know!"

Father Arnholm bowed, and smilingly remarked that, "He was always accustomed to speak his mind frankly, *as became his office;—might* he say that hav-

ing all faith in his own Church he *had* hoped that the holy ministrations of that Church might win the excellent judgment and amiable heart of Miss Courcy, to a just consideration of that Church's claims?"

"Ah, really!" that was very kind, Mrs. Courcy said; "but such a thing was impossible; it would need a complete making over of dear Magdalen; for, as she had before remarked, Magdalen was a Courcy, and Courcys were invariably Protestants—not bigots you know—but merely Protestants."

"Oh, Father Arnholm knew very well there was no bigotry—bigotry was a very ugly and unchristian term—but madam was mistaken; for a Courcy, by blood if not by name, was now an acolyte in the college of Saint Ignatius Loyola, and another Courcy by blood also was a nun."

"Of the Courcy family? How can that be?" Mrs. Courcy was more than astonished.

"Was there not a self-willed daughter of the house, an aunt of the late Henry Courcy, who made a marriage quite distasteful to her family, and disappeared and could be found no more?"—Father Arnholm could prove that Philip Lester, now acolyte at Saint Ignatius, was that lost daughter's grandson, and that Sister Maria Felix was her daughter, first cousin therefore of the late Henry Courcy. It was

easily proved, and the Father had all the papers; but what use of proving? there was nothing to be made by it.

"But," said Mrs. Courcy, "I have seen Sister Maria Felix often, and she never mentioned it to me. I cannot understand it."

"What should she have said? As a nun she claims no family ties; and she was not likely to speak on a subject upon which she had received no instructions from her superiors and directors."

Mrs. Courcy was lost in contemplation of the toe of her slipper, and also of the reticence and impassivity of that extraordinary being, a nun.

"But Sister Maria does not look at all like a Courcy," she said, rousing herself.

"She is probably more like her father, but her sister, Mrs. Lester, was very strikingly like the Courcys, and Mrs. Lester's son Philip, our acolyte, has their cast of face also."

"But why did not this daughter of the family, Maria's mother, make herself known to her kindred? why did she die without a word, and her children preserve her silence?"

"They proved by this silence their birth—they had the indomitable Courcy pride—and as you know there was nothing to be made by speaking, the property having been closely tied up, and the disobedient

daughter disinherited. Was it likely, therefore, that she should seek relatives who had forgotten and rejected her? In the bosom of the Catholic Church her wounded spirit found refuge, to that Church she left her children, rather than to a family who for one error had passed her coldly by. She was never destitute. Her husband was a drunkard and a villain; but a support was secured to her, and she died a pious woman, leaving two pious daughters."

"I really must talk to Sister Maria Felix about this!" cried Mrs. Courcy.

"Certainly, as you like, if you go to the house to see her—sisters make no visits of ceremony you know."

"And the boy, I believe I have seen, but did not notice him. Has he any fortune?"

"Not a cent, poor fellow. But he is a very bright lad. He may be sent here some day."

"I really must think about it," said Mrs. Courcy. "A Courcy ought not to be poor, or a dependant."

"And dependent on that very Church which the Courcys have always scorned," said the priest; and knowing when he had said enough, he now took his leave, Mrs. Courcy being in a state of high excitement over the "family."

That evening Viola carried from her home a parcel, which with every precaution for secresy she gave to a

little boy, who for a fee of ten cents took it to the House of Saint Vincent de Paul. Next day, about two hours before Father Arnholm was to leave for the city, there was a little private scene enacted in the parlor of that Northville "Sisters' House." The bundle brought by the boy proved to be a white dress, which Viola put on, and then having retired to a small closet-like room for her first effort at confession, and having confessed all she had ever said, done or thought, and been rigidly questioned and cross-questioned, Viola returned to the parlor for her baptism. Sister Mary Angela, aided by the Northville priest, had been the particular instructor of Viola, and she regarded the present ceremony with even more satisfaction than the other nuns who were present. The necessity of strict secresy was explained and impressed. Viola repeated her vows and promises; the wafer was put in her mouth; her forehead was crossed with holy chrism; and, after some further detail of ceremony, Viola was baptized into the only True Church. Of this ceremony, by the way, the white dress was not an indispensable part, except in the estimation of that romantic victim of chicanery, Viola Hastings.

While Viola was in the first tumult of agitation and foolish delight over this important step—how important she did not thus early realize—which she

had taken unknown to her nearest and truest friends, the Padre Arnholm was being trundled along city-ward by that most aggravating means of locomotion, an accommodation train—a train that while accommodating all who want to get off, is exceedingly unaccommodating to all who want to go on. The Padre Arnholm had missed the through express on account of Viola Hastings, and, as he was jarred and delayed on this slow-going train, he felt that Viola owed him a life-long reparation, and be sure he meant to demand it.

Why, it may be asked, did not the parish priest baptize this convert?

Does not one see that having the city priest take the affair on his hands the parish priest would not be blamed, or fall below par in Protestant estimation, when Viola's dereliction was discovered?

In the train, Father Arnholm leaned against the window, put his feet in the most comfortable position he could find, and took out his Breviary to read. He always did his reading where the Pharisees did their praying—in places where he could be seen of men.

What Father Arnholm read out of his Breviary that day was—that the fact of Sister Maria Felix being of the Courcy blood would form a new hold on Magdalen, who was slipping out of convent influence—

that Mrs. Courcy was soft, liberal and easily managed, and if that handsome boy Philip could be brought where he would please and interest her, she was very likely to endow him with some fair portion of those worldly goods which had very unkindly been willed away from his grandmother. Another thing that Padre Arnholm seemed to find in his Breviary was, that Philip was too modest, too devout, too self-sacrificing by half; he must be braced up with vanity, selfishness and cunning; and Father Arnholm concluded to withdraw the young acolyte in a measure from Dominick, and make him more of a worldling, by a few months under his own instructions. Then Father Arnholm thought Philip could be trusted in Northville, to aid the parish priest, and to court the favor of his rich cousin.

Arriving at these conclusions, the Breviary suddenly subsided into a very stupid book of prayers and ceremonies, and Father Arnholm from nodding went to sleeping, and from sleeping to dreaming, and as was lately his wont, went to dreaming that the devout Ambrose was stifling him with a pillow, grinding his knee into his breast, and clutching at his throat;—dreaming thus, he cried out and awoke. Other people in the car heard him cry out, saw him struggle as he roused. "The priest is suffering from a bad conscience," whispered one to another.

"Such a singular train of circumstances," said Mrs. Courcy to her daughter at the tea-table—referring to the story the priest had told her in the morning, and not to the accommodation train—"quite out of the common way, and really romantic."

"I don't know as it is, mamma," said daughter Magdalen, as she daintily tasted sponge-cake—"people are for ever getting scattered and lost to one another, and then turning up again—if I were to run away from you to-morrow, fully resolved never to be heard of again, I haven't the least doubt that when you were a lovely old lady of ninety or so, you'd stumble upon my grave-stone, or have your door besieged by half a dozen of my descendants, and there would be just such another eclaircissement as is happening every day."

"My dear child! I am perfectly shocked at you!"

"Please don't be, mamma—being shocked at meals is apt to produce or promote dyspepsia."

"Well, now, Magdalen, if you are ready to speak seriously about anything, doesn't it seem a pity that your cousin, Sister Maria Felix, should be poor, when we have money that might have part of it gone to her if your grandfather had not been over-indignant? It seems as if we ought to give her something, an annuity or something of that kind, it is *so* distressing to think of a *poor* Courcy."

"If you gave her a million to-day, mother, she would be just as poor to-morrow. Don't you know she is vowed to poverty? All she had she gave to the convent, and if she were given anything now it would go to the convent. You might as well give to the convent outright and have done with it: and as you have so often told me about my grandfathers building Protestant churches, it hardly looks consistent that their money should now be diverted to building up Romish Churches."

"Well, really, Magdalen, I had not looked at it in that light," said Madam Courcy. "Do you suppose Sister Maria Felix is happy?"

"No, of course not; how can she be? Of all wretched, distorted, perverted conditions, a nun's lot, in my opinion, is the most pitiable and bitter; and I believe Sister Maria Felix feels it so. I have seen her almost bite her lip through sometimes, when she thought no one was looking at her, as if she were in a very agony of repression."

Mrs. Courcy was exceedingly kind-hearted. She sighed feelingly over this picture of Saint Maria Felix, and tear-drops gathered in her eyes, until, looking through them, she saw two or three silver tea-urns instead of one, a multiplicity of sugar-bowls and creamers, and the cow couchant upon the lid of the butter-dish suddenly grew antic and frolicsome.

When these mists of vision had cleared away, Mrs. Courcy said, "But there is Philip, Magdalen—we really ought to do something about the boy—perhaps we might adopt him—you always said you wanted a brother."

"I never wanted a priest for a brother, though, and a priest he is sure to be," said Magdalen, the obdurate.

"But, my dear, very likely we can persuade him out of that notion."

"*His* notion is of very little consequence," said this discerning maiden—"it is the *Church* that holds the power over him, and if you persuade her acolyte out of her grasp, you will have to be a second young David, persuading the lamb out of the jaws of the lion and the bear."

"I hope you are not selfish, Magdalen."

"Not at all," said Magdalen.

"And I shall write to this Philip."

"Yes, do, mamma."

"And very likely we can settle some personal property, as bank stock, or mortgages on him; and Father Arnholm and I could be his guardians—Father Arnholm seems a very honorable man."

What a blessing that this charming specimen of a weak woman had a daughter stronger-headed and more wise than herself.

Magdalen replied promptly, "I hav'n't the most infinitesimal atom of confidence in Father Arnholm, and if he were allowed in any way to meddle with personal property, I should want three or four lawyers to keep the legal eye closely upon his performances."

"I am really grieved to see you so uncharitable," said the amiable materfamilias.

* * * * * *

Several months rolled away. The steady fires of summer waned into the fitful flames of autumn, and died out in white ashes where the snow fell; and through the woods beneath the white covering, like smothered embers, the winter-greens and checkerberries and rose and thorn-apple berries glowed unseen. On the warm winds the robins sped southward, and cold blasts from the North brought snow-birds, piping a hunger-cry. At the House of Charity, at Seven Sorrows, at church and college, and in Northville and Saint Vincent de Paul, all was outwardly the same. Mother Denny ruled on with a rod of iron, and Mother Vallé chilled and repressed with a hand of ice. Sister Mary Angela watched Sister Maria Felix and reported her as slow and lukewarm. A new set of pupils had come into the anarchy of Anna Pauline's school-room; and those who had quarrelled for places when Philip was there had gone out to be servants, artisans and day-laborers, who

could hardly write their names, whose cramped minds and idle, unfaithful lives should be so many clogs on the wheels of the progress of the State.

But while all was outwardly the same the life in death, or the death in life, stirred slowly from within, as all that exists must stir and change. Day after day, in stolid silence, Sister Maria Felix trod the routine of her duties. She was trusted—she was believed firm in her faith—no omission, no betraying word did even the vigilant Mary Angela have to lay to her charge—and yet the passing months fixed more and more firmly in Maria Felix's mind the fact that her whole life was a folly and a mistake. She had bitten Rome's apple of Sodom, and while the ashes lay on her lips, and stifled in her throat, her secret heart cried out for bread. She had no one to love, no one to trust. The boy who had been her life's last tie was taken from her and taught to forget her, and she dared not show the craving of her affection by a single inquiry, or the mention of his name. When she went in the round of her duties through the street, homes and firesides mocked her with what might have been. Her convent life had killed much of the religious instinct within her. She had found no holiness that was satisfying, and that afforded a compensation for utter loneliness, for a past without a pleasure, a present deprived of every consolation,

nd a future darkening and deepening as a night vithout a morning, and without a star! The death if her sister had shaken to ruin the foundations if Maria Felix's faith. While Philip with youth's reedom could speak the woe and horror of his mind, Maria Felix must crush all exhibition of her pain, ior dared unfold one of the wild thoughts shaking ier respecting that sister's soul, that no faith and no Christ had certainly saved, but which had dropped nto the horrible certainties and the more horrible ncertainties of purgatory. Her creed had for her o consolation, it fenced her in an ever-narrowing edge of thorns. There was a Christ; but she could ot lay hold of him for the crowd of saints between. 'here was Mary, there were Holy Confessors and Iost Holy Martyrs; but then nobody was *sure* of etting anything from them. What was accepted as certainty one day must be all lost in doubt the next. Iaria Felix was in a sad case indeed. She kept all iese doubts and fears to herself at confession. She ared not unburden her heart, and had less encouragement to, as of all men she had ever seen she most ated and distrusted the Northville priest. This was nother secret burden which she must bear. There 'as one hope that remained to her; which was, iat when death came the infinite terror with which ie regarded it would be done away, that she would

find darkness grow light at life's extremest hour, and would be rewarded for life-long endurance, by comfort at life's close. She could not like Dominick say with Saint Teresa, "Let us live in silence and in hope; the Lord will take care of the souls he loves." To Dominick in long imprisonment had come, by God's free grace, renewal of soul and the spirit of God's little child, but to Maria Felix had come only doubting and almost despair. Even Maria Felix's last hope and feeble faith were doomed to be broken—broken by poor little Sister Josepha, that weakest, most patient and most oppressed of nuns. Mother Denny managed to have her victim sent back to the House of Charity in the fall, and then poor Josepha had to act as scullery-maid and general doer of penances, until Father Arnholm took pity on her and at Christmas sent her again to Northville, dying of consumption.

CHAPTER IX.

NUN AND POSTULANT.

FATHER ARNHOLM sent Josepha to Northville in all kindness. He knew her lot in the House of Charity was unspeakably bitter, and that she was there persecuted with all the wretched aggravations of spite and cruelty, with which one warped, hard and narrow-minded woman can persecute a weaker. He was sincerely sorry for the trembling, wan-faced, quavering-voiced little creature, who came weekly to kneel in his confessional, trusting to the gilded ostentation set above it, "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted." When, as she bowed there one day, the soft, catching voice ceased entirely, the kneeling figure fell inanimate, the carvings of the confessional cutting a long unfelt gash down the whole cheek, and Father Arnholm was forced to pick up his penitent, place her on one of the chapel benches, and call for some of the sisters to take her in charge; when he found his priestly garments stained with the slow-dropping blood from the wounded face, and realized how light and

shrunken was the poor little form he lifted up, he felt a new pity awakened, and said she must be sent to Northville to return no more. True she was only a nun—a nearly worn-out portion of a great money-making and fine-showing machine, devised for the benefit of holy Rome—but Father Arnholm thought she might as well be allowed to live as be forced prematurely to die; and perhaps quiet, kindness, Maria Felix's doctoring and exemption from petty persecution might prolong her days. These expectations seemed at first likely to be realized; Josepha retraced her way toward life and health for a few weeks; then the feebleness of her constitution gained the victory, turned her about, and day by day she went with steady steps toward death.

The nun's afflicted case awoke all the motherly instinct in Maria Felix. She petted her, nursed her, sat by her side many weary hours of day and night. There was no doctor, for no lay person can enter the chamber of a holy nun; but the doctors were not much loss in a case already hopeless, and Maria Felix's system of prescribing was very likely as good as any.

The patient was evidently not going to live, and Maria Felix said to herself, "Now I can see how a nun will die; now I can note more carefully than ever before what consolations our Church affords in

the hour of death, and I can see what my chance is likely to be."

To Maria Felix watching in this frame of mind there was little consolation in Josepha. The dying nun wept by the hour.

"It is idle to mourn so," said Sister Mary Angela —"it will not restore you—you *must* die, why not meet death bravely?"

"Because I am not brave, and I am afraid," said Josepha.

"Life, my dear Sister Josepha," said Sister Mary Catherine, the zealous sister, who did the special piety for the Northville house, "has not in it so much beauty or happiness that we should desire its continuance. We are the brides of Christ, far from his heavenly habitation, and we should be glad to go where, holy and acceptable, we shall continue in his presence for ever."

"I could say so too when I was well," said Josepha; "but now that death is near all looks so black; I do not see any hope or comfort."

"There will be absolution and extreme unction and the holy sacrament at the last—you will do very well," said Mary Angela.

In the silence of the night, when the other sisters were asleep, Maria Felix sat by Josepha in the little infirmary. On a bare stand a candle guttered and

burned low before a crucifix; from the wall a dingy picture of the Mother of Sorrows looked down; over the door was a grim portrait of Saint Vincent de Paul; four narrow white-covered, small-pillowed pallets were in the room—three were unoccupied—the fourth bore Josepha's wasted frame. Maria Felix sat holding the dying nun's hand. Slowly Josepha spoke.

"Oh, sister, I have done my best—I have made good confessions, done no mortal sin, and yet I have no hope, no comfort—before me is only loss and ruin and awful fire. I am alone, I can feel no presence of Christ—the saints do not help me. Oh, sister, it is *so* hard to die!"

"Keep on praying to the Virgin and your patron saint, and all will come right in the end. I say a rosary for you every day," said Maria Felix.

"Nothing does me any good," wailed Josepha. "All is blackness and want. Something is lacking. I feel as if my soul had always been left uncared for."

"I'm sure, dear Josepha, our religion is all for the soul," said Maria Felix, speaking as habit prompted.

"When you come to die, you will feel as I do, that our religion has touched little trifles, has fed and clothed fancies and imaginations and outward things; and that there is a starved, cold, naked soul

within, that must go out of you, and has nowhere to go."

* * * * *

The last confession, the extreme unction, the blessed sacrament had been given. Josepha was dying. After the consecrated wafer had been laid on her tongue, no less holy thing must touch her lips, even a drop of water must be denied when her mouth was parched with the fever of the last fearful agony. Two of the sisters, weary with watching, were asleep. Mary Catherine prayed in the oratory. Sister Maria Felix was alone with the dying.

"Now that all the good offices of the Church are done, are you not content?" she asked, eagerly.

Josepha shook her head.

"Have you no comfort?"

"None: this burning craving after water begins an eternal thirst."

"Have courage; yet a little while and peace will come."

"Never, never, sister; I cannot be more surely lost—give me, as your last good office, water—water—soon I can be given none."

"I dare not; it might destroy you; it would be sacrilege. Look to the blessed Virgin. Trust to what the Church has done for you, and be satisfied. Address your heart to prayer."

"No one hears me—I cannot pray"—There was a stupor, then Josepha opened her eyes—her face had changed. "All is dark, I cannot see, I am going now."

"And now at last, Sister Josepha, have you hope and light?"

"No hope, no hope; Sister Maria, they deceive us! —all is dark—all is dark!"

She threw up her hands, gave one cry checked by the death-rattle in her throat, and now Maria Felix was alone with the dead.

The first shock over, Sister Maria Felix began to compose the limbs and settle in the due gravity of death her sister nun's body. As she did so, she muttered to herself, "I see, I see, it is one long deceit! Our religion gives us no comfort in life, no hope in death. We are of all the world most miserable."

After this Sister Maria Felix, unchanged in outward seeming, was changed in spirit. She was utterly without faith; she had lost all belief in her own creed; she did not know that there was any better in the world; she had no heroism to become a martyr by speaking her private feelings; she did not love truth so well as to tell it in spite of everything; she knew terrible things were in store for an apostate nun, and rather than suffer them she would keep her

feelings to herself, and go on in the same old way to which years had accustomed her.

While Maria Felix had changed thus, a change had also come to her nephew, Philip. The young acolyte had been taken in hand by Father Arnholm, who gradually drew him in a measure out of Dominick's influence, and strove to make him less of a devotee, while not less a Catholic, and while fostering in him a useful religious enthusiasm, to impress on him the importance of externals, and show him that there is to Romanism a worldly as well as a spiritual view. Nor was this task a difficult one. Philip's first enthusiasm had exhausted itself. From intense worship he had sprung back to hard study, which had ever been congenial to him. The growing mind craved something higher and stronger than prayers to Mary and the patronage of Mary, and gradually he was less at the altars and more at his books. Philip was in the very midst of the most learned Order of the Romish Church; the college library was filled with the voluminous writings of the Jesuit fathers, and perched on a high stool among these bookshelves Philip read as he had read in the sacristy of the House of Charity.

Although as before stated the most learned of the Romish Orders, Jesuitism has produced no grand poets, no great historians, no eloquent orators, no

brilliant essayists. In the long lapse of years since a mighty but uneducated mind inaugurated that Order of students, of zealots and of unhesitating obedience, we look in vain for master minds that soar above the common herd, and rule the world of thought. Jesuitism develops but one way. In casuistry Jesuits are unrivaled. All their writers are casuists. There have been volumes written to show that reason should be completely subjugated, that the rule of obedience demands a man in full possession of his senses to believe that black is white if his superior says so; and surely it must take reams of paper to prove how one should and could *believe* black white, while at the same time he *knew it was not!* Marina has long chapters to show that while authority is to be obeyed and respected, it is perfectly right to assassinate a king. Father Garnet expounds how lying is wrong, and yet lying is right, and one commits no sin, but adds unto himself righteousness when he lies for the good of the Church. Other Jesuit authors show that it was perfectly right for Gerard the Jesuit to take the alms which William of Orange benevolently bestowed upon him, and buy a pair of pistols to shoot William through the heart.

Poring over these books, Philip was likely to become more of a casuist than a moralist, more of a reasoner on abstruse questions than a possessor of

personal piety. His mind was thus diverted from its natural honest frankness, his conscience was robbed of its original capability to judge between right and wrong, and his tenderness of heart and ready credulity were slowly wearing away. Once he had believed all things good of the Holy Catholic Church; —once he had regarded the dress of any religious Order as the badge of holiness, and had been ready to bow down before any monk or priest;—but when he heard Arnholm denounce the Capuchins as a set of beggars and idiots, and Ansel declare the barefooted Carmelites to be a pack of hypocrites; when other priests denominated the Augustinian Friars gluttons and wine-bibbers; when he learned that nearly every other Order called the Jesuits self-seekers and fanatics; when he found that the Franciscans and the Dominicans hated each other cordially, and that between all the different Orders there was an utter lack of that fervent charity which Paul recommends to Christians; what wonder that he began to grow sneering and critical, and sought for foibles and graver errors, rather than believed all things and hoped all things?

When Philip read concerning "Mary" that it "was necessary that our Lord Christ should have a mother, especially for this, that she might be the mother and advocate of sinners, who, if through *pusillanimity* they should be afraid to resort to him, might

confidently approach his blessed mother,"* was it not natural for Philip to say to himself, "Oh then, if I were not *pusillanimous*, if I were not cowardly, I might go to Christ without intervention of Mary, and if I worship her it is a sign of cowardice in me." Once suggested, this thought would continually intrude and make his devotions to our Lady less frequent and fervent. He mentioned his thoughts to Dominick.

"We are such sinners that we all have cause to fear," said the monk, mildly.

Dominick felt that Philip was being withdrawn from him, and it pained him, for he loved the boy most tenderly; but he said meekly to himself, "It is right—I am not wise enough to teach this boy—I am so apt to err, that I might lead him wrong."

"My son," he said to Philip, "cherish piety, cherish humility and holiness of heart. Live for religion."

"It seems so uncertain what religion is, Brother Dominick," said Philip—"some say one thing, some say another—but if I live for study and the cultivation of the mind, then I may hope to attain to eminence."

"Eminence in this life, son Philip, is hardly worth seeking for. Let it come to him for whom God in-

* Month of Mary, p. 54.

tends it. If you live for the cultivation of the mind, my son, how bitterly will you be disappointed!—I can speak from experience. Oh, Philip! how the circle of thought narrows day by day, how the mind grows small and cramped in a monastic life, where there is nothing to develop it, nothing to sustain it, but it is left to feed upon itself and to dwindle every hour, until one hardly knows whether we have any mind at all."

"But, Brother Dominick! consider our great men who have thought and written!"

"A few, boy, a very few. Think of the uncounted thousands who have been simply animated machines. No, boy, no—I speak from experience—if there is no life in the heart, there is no life for us anywhere—brain life slowly and surely dies among us"—and Dominick pressed his hands to his tonsured, gray-fringed head, as if bewildered.

Going along the corridor, Philip smiled as he thought—"Brother Dominick is good, but weak, possessing a kind heart, but small brain power!" and by this soliloquy he indicated how he had changed from the simple-minded boy who had regarded Dominick as the very essence of goodness and wisdom.

Father Arnholm had begun to take Philip with him at times when he went abroad in the discharge

of his pastoral duties. The good Father liked to go on these progresses through his domain in state, with gown and gloves, cocked-hat and cane, a gorgeous missal in purple and gold in his hand, and two acolytes in black robes at his heels, each acolyte carrying a Breviary.

The Connors were anything but favorites with their priest, and while he was yet lying in his bed, in the slow recovery after that fearful struggle with Ambrose, he had commissioned Ansel to go down to Gabrielle street to question, to threaten, and to condemn. Ansel had accordingly made a descent while the Connors were eating a frugal dinner, and his fulminations had been almost worthy of the pope himself. He had warned the Connors against Miss Judith Vaughn, against all heretics and all their readings and instructions; and, as on the occasion of Arnholm's visit, Mary had yielded weeping and beseeching, and Patrick had yielded sullenly and reluctantly. Patrick had been rather behind-hand with regard to church duties, confession and communion, and Father Arnholm thought it quite time to go down personally in state and reprimand him. The Father took Philip and the Irish acolyte, and paced slowly toward Gabrielle street.

Philip had never been there since his mother's funeral; but he remembered Mary Connor's room,

and the lounge in the corner, where he had been lying when first the word "Purgatory," had rung in his ear the death-knell of comfort concerning his mother's soul.

"Patrick Connor!" said the priest, standing in the laborer's doorway, the acolytes just behind him, "are you resolved to be one of those heretics whom we of the true and holy Church do, on stated days, consign with curses to everlasting destruction?"

"I hav'n't left the true Church, yer riv'rence, and I'm no heretic," said Patrick Connor, sullenly.

"You are going headlong into heresy," said Father Arnholm, sternly. "You are dreaming of that vile and pernicious principle called religious liberty, which is in itself the blackest heresy. You have been listening to a book which our holy Father the pope has called 'poisonous reading' and a 'fatal pasture-ground.' You have encouraged acquaintanceship with Christian association men, and these Christian associations are inventions of the devil. You have moreover neglected to come dutifully to confession; you are living in the mortal sin of secret rebellion, and, besides absenting yourself from the most holy sacrament of Communion, you do not attend regularly at church, and owe four dollars and sixty-three cents of church dues!"

"We can't come to church together regular, yer

riv'rence," said Mary, "on account one of us must sthay home with the babby, and Patrick's coat's bad, sirr!"

"As to the dues, yer riv'rence, wages are low and work scarce, and it's full as much as *I* can do to keep soul and body together, and if I'm behind-hand with me dues, I'm behind-hand altogether, intirely," said Patrick, "for barring three dollars, I hav'n't a cent in the world."

"You are not likely to get more unless you pay the Church her own. You can pay over three dollars, and I'll remit the remainder for another month."

"But there's not a bite of meat in the house for Sunday, yer riv'rence," said Mary.

"You can fast and pray, as you have much need to—a judgment awaits you, Mary Connor, and the babe in your arms, which you will pervert from the holy faith — Patrick, shall I pronounce upon you and your family the greater excommunication, or will you return to your duty?"

"Oh, yer riv'rence, never excommunicate us!" cried Mary, "it's true to the Church we are intirely. Pay over the three dollars, Pat, me man; we'll borry a bit to last over Sunday, and it's ourselves will be at church and confession."

"Patrick! do you agree to what your wife says?

or shall I bid her leave you as a heretic whom the Church abhors?"

"Say you're obedient, Patrick, jewel; it's meself and the babby can nivver lave you at all!" cried Mary.

"I'm not ag'in the Church," said Patrick, holding fast to his last money. "I'm a true Catholic sure enough."

Mary slowly twisted the money from his reluctant fingers, and held it out to the priest, Patrick feeling it very hard thus to be made penniless, but not daring to remonstrate.

Philip blushed for shame behind his Breviary, as his thoughts took form thus:—Can anything justify Father Arnholm for this extortion? Is it right to rob the poor, and is this not robbery in the name of God?

"It is not," said Father Arnholm as he strode homeward, "the value of this trifle of money, but it is the effect of the man's submission to which we must look. The rule of the Church must be iron, if these common people are to be kept under, Philip. The parental firmness of our Church as exercised by her priests should never be relaxed. Let all these things be borne in your mind."

With Father Arnholm, Philip went sometimes to the House of Charity, and was learning in boy-

pride to treat the sisters with the lofty condescension worthy of his embryo priesthood, and to look forward to the day when he should rule some such petty kingdoms and their revenues.

One feeling Father Arnholm unconsciously failed to instill. Philip could not learn an appropriate hatred of the common schools. He had been prejudiced in their favor, and he could not scorn and loathe what he knew to be noble: but he was beyond frankly speaking out his mind, so he heard the priest's tirades in a silence that seemed assent.

It had taken many recitations to decide who first said mass; but it was at length conclusively proven that to Mary belonged that honor, when she presented Christ as a babe in the Temple.

It took some time to instruct the college students in the Ten Commandments as to their bearing upon the Confessional. They were taught that there are venial sins and mortal sins—that the same action may be a venial or a mortal sin, according to circumstances—that lying, for example, if you lie for the Church, is a virtue, but if you lie for yourself it is a venial sin, and if you lie *against* the Church (or even if you tell truth against the Church) it is a mortal sin. As to theft, a big theft is a mortal sin, a little theft, venial —nevertheless, ten cents stolen *from* the Church is mortal sin, ten dollars stolen *for* the Church is virtue,

five dollars stolen from one *who can afford to lose it,* is venial.* They were also thoroughly indoctrinated in the Glories of Mary, some of which are that "Mary so loved the world that she gave her only begotten son," † that Mary is the one "in whose hands is our salvation," ‡ she is our "greatest hope," "our entire hope," the "only hope of sinners." §

When thus sufficiently instructed, Philip was made a sub-deacon, and he exulted in his office.

While Philip rejoiced in being a sub-deacon, Viola yearned to be a postulant. She had not been forced to a convent "because her doll was stuffed with saw-dust," but her dresses were less costly than Magdalen's, and babies at home were multiplied, and Viola did not like to sweep and dust and make cake, and she was sure her father loved the little half-sisters better than he loved herself;—she would go to the convent where everybody would love her, and praise her, and where she would have nothing to do but

* This assertion was boldly made to a Protestant minister by a priest in New York in 1869.

† See "Glories of Mary," N. Y. *James B. Kerker, approved by † John (archbishop of N. Y.)*, p. 449.

‡ Ibid, page 136. § Ibid, page 90.

See also deliverance of Pope Gregory XVI. date August 15th 1832.

Says the Roman Breviary (Sep. 9th) "Tu es Spes unica *peccatorum.*

take part in ceremonies, wear a veil, pray to images and be a saint. Viola wrote to Mother Vallé, "I am so lonesome at home, dear Mother Vallé — nobody appreciates me—nobody sympathizes with me—I am sick of the world—let me come to your convent and be one of your happy and holy children." After this rhapsody she calmed down, and in plain terms stated that she would go to the city on a certain day, in a certain train, and if Mother Vallé would send a sister to the depôt to conduct her to the convent, all her troubles would be ended; and Mother Vallé was to answer under cover to Sister Mary Angela.

With this important document in her pocket Viola set out for the post-office. But on her way the thought came to her of her parent's woe at her desertion, of the possible repentance she might feel, of the impossibility of drawing back when the fatal step was taken, and, to have a little longer to think about it, she called on Judith Vaughn. Judith's influence was healthful, she was full of bright plans, ever in buoyant spirits, life was to her full of work and blessing, in her presence the world and society became less odious to Viola, and the girl nearly decided not to post her letter at present, when Judith Vaughn, looking out of the window, quoted from Shakespeare

"Verona's summer hath not such a flower!"

This simple incident had a disastrous effect on

Viola's future; for, as she also looked out, she saw that Judith was looking at Magdalen, who was crossing the street. Jealousy was Viola's bane. She was sure that Judith would never have said *she* was fairer than the blossoms of "Verona's summer." She would go to the convent and be the flower of that institution. She said good-bye, and directly posted her letter. Answer came in the "Come to my arms!" style peculiar to abbesses. Viola was all ready to obey, when Providence afforded her another delay. She had a cold and a chill, and instead of going to the city to meet the "sisters," she was kept in her room drinking hot lemonade, taking footbaths, and being tenderly cared for by Mrs. Hastings.

Once recovered, Viola again wrote to Mother Vallé giving explanation of her non-appearance, and begging the "Mother" to send a sister to meet her on another day which she named. To make assurance doubly sure, Viola made arrangements apparently to visit a friend at a town some ten miles distant, and her father, willing to gratify her, himself escorted her to the cars one early spring morning, bought her ticket, gave her some money, and kissed her good-bye.

As he was leaving the car, Judith Vaughn came in and took her place a few seats behind Viola; she knew where Viola was supposed to be going, and

being on a business expedition herself, and not caring for company, took out her note-book and was occupied with it until the car had passed Viola's station, when she saw Viola yet on the train and paying her fare to the city! Judith put up her note-book and began to consider. She had often been told that she should have been a lawyer; she herself laughingly asserted that she ought to be chief of police, or head detective—it did not take her very long to divine what Viola intended, and to lay her own plans. She went over to Viola and sat down by her side, saying, "So you are going to the city, my dear! How nice for me to have company. I know you have no friends there, so you shall stay with me, and we will have the finest time! I will answer for you to your father if you stay more than a day, and you can come home with me."

Viola could not conceal her consternation—Judith Vaughn of all persons! and resolved to stay by her, and come home with her—her plan was lost, ruined utterly; for Viola respectfully believed that no power on earth could circumvent Judith Vaughn, and she felt convinced that Judith suspected her. Judith did not, however, look very suspicious. She opened a little basket of tempting luncheon and asked Viola to partake of it. She bought candies from the boys and gave Viola a book to read. She invited her

to go with her to a concert, and promised to be her escort to an exhibition of choice pictures. Viola resigned herself to her fate—there was no escaping Judith Vaughn—she must go with her, be brought back by her, and disappoint Mother Vallé a second time.

While Viola thought these things she seemed to be reading, and was also eating gum-drops. Judith had a book and behind its pages covertly watched her young companion. By and by Judith put her book in her satchel, and began to talk so brightly about different things which she meant to see and do, that Viola became interested in spite of herself. But now they were entering the city.

"Did you bring any baggage?" asked Judith.

No, Viola had no baggage.

"I'll call a hack, and as soon as the driver gets my valise we will be off," said Judith, slipping her hand through Viola's arm.

As Judith left the car she gave a keen glance about the depôt, believing she should find somebody waiting for her foolish companion, and her worst fears were confirmed when she saw the big bonnets and black veils of two nuns, a tall and a short one, and detected Viola in the act of making signals to them.

"See those nuns; are they some of the Northville sisters?" asked Judith, sweetly.

"No, oh no, of course not," said Viola, embarrassed.

"Are you acquainted with them?"

"No, no," said Viola.

"Ah, I thought you spoke to them. Here, Viola, this is the hack; jump in now, and I will be your chaperon through the city."

Viola's vexation at thus being carried captive was in a great measure done away by the delights of three days spent with Judith Vaughn. She sent some would-be longing thoughts toward the "Seven Sorrows;" but consoled herself with the resolve that she would write to Mother Vallé, and explain matters when she got home.

Meantime when the tall nun and the short nun came back without Viola, Mother Vallé was very angry. Here was the second time that Viola had been false to an appointment, and the superioress was convinced that the girl was playing fast and loose with her, and that for the first time in her life she, the Mother of "Seven Sorrows," was a victim of treachery. Even Viola's humble letter of explanation, detailing all the circumstances which had prevented her from joining the waiting nuns, and had forced her back to Northville, did not satisfy Mother Vallé.

"Miss Vaughn questioned me very closely, and I

think she suspected something, but I kept my secret and did not tell her a word. She told me a great deal about convent life, which she says is very miserable. But I did not believe her—I know more about sisters and convents than she does I am sure—and I shall certainly come to you before long, when I hope you will kindly receive your affectionate and obedient daughter, VIOLA."—Thus wrote Viola, but Mother Vallé doubted.

Father Arnholm came to the "Seven Sorrows," and Mother Vallé handed over the letter.

"The girl is trying to deceive us," she said.

"Not a bit of it. I daresay this is a true account."

"But this is the second time I have sent to meet her!"

"Try it again if she wants you to; she is bound to come," said the priest.

"But the idea of the thing! She might have excused herself to that young woman, or broken right off and come to the sisters, I am sure," persisted the irate superior.

"You do not know Miss Vaughn. Probably she took such firm and self-assured possession of Viola, that the girl felt perfectly helpless in her hands. Miss Vaughn has uncommon strength of character, and our daughter Viola, as you know, is rather weak

—which makes her all the more eligible to us." The father laughed.

"If she *is* weak, she is also obstinate as a mule," said Mother Vallé, sulkily.

"Obstinacy is a characteristic of weak minds," said Padre Arnholm, "but I daresay your discipline here will rid her of her obstinacy."

"I'll warrant it will," said Mother Vallé, snapping her teeth together, in a way that might have made Viola shiver.

Judith had indeed spoken plainly to Viola as they traveled home. She had questioned, reasoned, and, taking Viola's penchant for conventual life for granted, had earnestly implored. Viola also thought that Miss Vaughn had given some warning to Mr. and Mrs. Hastings; for, while they increased their kindness to her, they undoubtedly watched her closely. Viola now looked upon herself as a martyr for conscience' sake, and in this character made herself very disagreeable. When Mrs. Hastings said the "sisters" were deluded, were wasting their lives, and were very likely unhappy in their present lot, Viola burst into tears, and said she "could not and would not hear her dearest friends abused." When Mr. Hastings expressed his belief that the Northville priest was a "bad fellow," Viola flamed up, saying, that he was a wise and holy man, and she would like

to see the Protestant minister who would sacrifice everything for the good of the Church and the salvation of souls, as the priest did.

Viola denominated Judith Vaughn a "perfect bigot, without the least morsel of Christian charity," and thought "if she would take a few lessons in meekness and devotion from the sisters, she would be vastly improved." Viola nearly broke friendship with Magdalen on account of Romanism, because Magdalen advised her not to go to Catholic church.

Viola's visits to church and to the House of Saint Vincent de Paul, were now mostly stolen, and therefore all the sweeter. She thought she was not wasting her time entirely in religious matters, for she was being taught by the priest and the nuns how properly to make the sign of the cross, how and when to bow in worship; she was also instructed in the meaning of the church ornaments, the spiritual intention of the ceremonies used in mass, the signification of the different colors used in worship, and the reason for the different garments wherewith a priest is vested, in all of which points Viola became wise as her teachers, and wiser than the children of light. By repression her fervor increased, and she resolved to make a last effort to fly to a convent. Magdalen invited Viola to spend a day and a night with her, and Viola insisted upon doing so. Mrs. Hastings hesitated, dis-

liking to have Viola away so long for fear of mischief; but Viola said she *would* go, and with injunctions from her harassed mother to stay at Magdalen's, enjoy herself and be home early next day, she departed in company with Magdalen for her home.

Viola had had no opportunity to send word to Mother Vallé; but she had obtained Father Arnholm's address, and to the city she was determined now to escape. About three in the afternoon she complained of headache, said she must go home, pettishly refused Magdalen's proffered company, and, bidding her "good-bye," apparently started homeward. But, alas for Viola, she diverged to the depôt, and was soon on her way to the city.

Late in the evening, there was a timid ring at Father Arnholm's door, and a girlish voice asked for the priest. Kitty, in a high state of curiosity, introduced the visitor to the parlor, where his reverence was reading one of his own effusions in the "Catholic Ensign." Father Arnholm laid down his paper and looked curiously at the intruder. Kitty departed with lingering feet.

"Is it possible that this is my daughter Viola Hastings?" asked the priest.

"Yes, father," said Viola, with a little sob of excitement.

"And how come you here so late, and alone?"

"I was going to Mother Vallé at 'Our Lady of Seven Sorrows,' and I could not find it, and it is so late I came here. Won't you take me there, Father? Oh, I do want to go there and be a nun!"

"Sit down, daughter Viola. Yours is certainly a praiseworthy wish; but it is too late to go to the convent to-night. Again, my daughter, if your father suspects where you are, he will demand you of us."

"I will not go home," said Viola, stubbornly. "I was eighteen last week, I am old enough to choose for myself, and I choose to be a nun."

"In that case I do not know that any one has a right to hinder your holy inclinations. And you are willing to go to the convent, renounce the world and your own wishes, and become an obedient and holy daughter of the Church, the chosen bride of Christ?"

Viola was so excited by what she considered the romance of her adventures, and also by the strife between her conscience which bade her stay at home and her stubborn will which bade her go to the convent in spite of everything, that she was now crying passionately. Father Arnholm hated crying. He was a hard man, and while he knew the fate this girl was achieving for herself was hard and bitter enough, he was not willing she should have the consolation

of crying over it. Let the stones in the way cut her feet, let the seven sorrows pierce her flesh, let her crushed heart quiver and ache and die, but let it all be done in tearless silence, and Father Arnholm was fully prepared to give her parting spirit absolution, and say a mass for her eternal repose; but he was *not* prepared to have her sit trembling, and soaking her pocket-handkerchief in his parlor, when he wanted to read the "Ensign."

"I fear you are faint-hearted, and want to draw back from the good you have meditated," he said dryly.

"No indeed, Father Arnholm; but I feel so frightened and excited."

"There is no need for that. To-morrow I will take you to 'Seven Sorrows' in my carriage, and put you safely in Mother Vallé's hands. For to-night, I will call the housekeeper and tell her to take care of you." Thus saying, Padre Arnholm rang a bell and in came the housekeeper, her cap-ruffle quivering, and her spectacles looking volumes at poor Viola. The housekeeper sniffed and sneezed, and fluttered her ruffles, and glimmered her spectacles at Viola under the gaslight, until Viola felt nearly annihilated.

"Grandmother," said Father Arnholm, "here is a young lady who is going to the Seven Sorrows as a postulant—you can take care of her to-night. We

have a great regard for her—she is a converted heretic—a very faithful daughter of the Church."

"Come on then," said the apocryphal "grandmother" to Viola, very tartly.

"Won't you give me your blessing, Father Arnholm?" said Viola, wiping her face, having now had her cry out.

"Certainly, my daughter," said Father Arnholm, rising pompously, and extending his crossed hands over her bowed head he blessed her in Latin, which, as Viola did not understand a word of that language, was exceedingly edifying to her.

The housekeeper gave Viola a spare bed in her own room, and while she was undressing questioned her very closely. Viola was nothing loathe to talk about herself, and she gave her whole history quite unreservedly. Thus placated, the housekeeper took off her cap, laid aside her spectacles, sat down on a stool, and beginning to scour her bald head with salt and whisky in a vain attempt to make the hair grow again, related to Viola her autobiography graphically enough, if not grammatically, and detailed also her troubles with the cook who was ill-tempered, and with Kitty who was vain and over-fond of pink, blue and cherry breast-knots and hair-ribbons.

Finding time at last to say her rosary, Viola knelt and continued an hour at her devotions, intent on

impressing the housekeeper with her eligibility for a religious life. When she rose from her knees the housekeeper was asleep.

Early next morning the priest's carriage with closed curtains was at the door to take Father Arnholm and Viola to "Seven Sorrows." On the way the priest questioned Viola upon what her father was likely to do about her flight to a convent, and where her money was, how invested, under what conditions, and how obtainable.

The two doors of "Seven Sorrows" opened, and Padre Arnholm led Viola into the presence of Mother Vallé.

Seeing her proselyte fairly in her grasp mollified Mother Vallé so much that she took Viola's fingers in her own cold hand, and welcomed her in elaborate phrase.

Viola had entered the harbor of all her hopes, the convent of the "Seven Sorrows." She was given a straight black gown, a rosary was hung at her waist, her hair was cut short in her neck, and she wore a plain white cap. She caught her own reflection in the polished panel of a door and thought the cap rather becoming. As to the hair, she had always been vexed that her locks were not as luxuriant as Magdalen's, and it was quite a comfort now to be on a par with everybody else, and to see all the postu-

lants, novices and nuns with locks as short and straight as her own. All was new and strange—the stillness, the solemnity, the method, the chilly dormitory, the ever-watching sister—yes, at last Viola had obtained her own way, she was a postulant and would be a nun.

CHAPTER X.

PRIEST AND ACOLYTE.

ROME knows how to wait. More than any other organization, she realizes the policy and the strength of cautious delay. Her waiting is not patience, neither is it apathy. It is the slowness of diplomacy, the quiet of the panther—alert, repressed, claws unsheathed though hidden, eyes half shut but watching still, hair bristling, ears erect, muscles quivering—waiting, waiting, never weary—waiting for the prey, and ready for the spring!

According to the legend of the dreamer, "Giant Pope, though he be yet alive, is, by reason of age, and also of the many shrewd brushes that he met with in his younger days, grown so crazy and stiff in his joints, that he can now do little more than sit in his cave's mouth, grinning at pilgrims as they go by, and biting his nails because he cannot come at them." And this to-day is the judgment of many of Rome's foes who are, nevertheless, far less crafty and less strong than Rome herself. Rome is neither dead nor asleep. Had she made her onset years ago,

she would have failed;—did she even make the spring to-day, she would fall short of her destined victims;—but she knows how to wait. Be not deceived, O friends; there is a living and a fearful danger in Rome, who moves slowly in darkness, who sits quiet in daylight, who delays, but who never gives up.

Rome's children are trained to this waiting. Her priests understand it full well. It is an art they have all carefully studied; and in its logic Father Arnholm was not deficient. When, therefore, he wanted Philip to win favor with his Courcy cousins, when he believed that the result of such favor would be that two rich, generous, impulsive and easily influenced women would bestow upon their pleasant young relative a portion of their abundant means, Father Arnholm did not send the boy to Northville at once. "The plan will keep, I must fit the boy for his part," said he. Hence, to mould the boy according to his own will, to mature him, to fix him in purpose, and to make him sufficient for the mission on which he should be sent, acting superior to the haste that undoes itself, Father Arnholm had Philip in training more than a year, before he decided that the tall manly lad, far beyond his classmates in his studies, and wise out of his years in Romish lore, was fit to be trusted beyond his own sight. When

this hour in the sub-deacon's history had arrived, Father Arnholm had him sent to Northville to aid the parish priest and to cultivate the friendship of the Courcys. We are not to suppose that Philip was out of leading-strings—that is a pass to which Rome's children never attain—he was under orders from his immediate superior the priest—Father Arnholm was back and forth continually—even Maria Felix and Sister Mary Angela were of use, to see that this child of Rome did not fall into the way of that irrepressible heretic, Judith Vaughn.

Prior to the time of his going to Northville, Philip had had some correspondence with Mrs. Courcy, a correspondence which was inaugurated by that lady herself in a very pretty letter, wherein she expressed much interest in her young cousin. Her letters to Philip were always directed to Father Arnholm's care. That worthy bestowed on them a thoughtful perusal, and then graciously handed them over to Philip. At a suitable time he ordered Philip to reply, and gave him a general idea of what his epistle should be like. The letter prepared, Father Arnholm corrected and retouched it, thus—"A little more courtliness here, Philip!—a little more elegance there—Mrs. Courcy likes ceremony, it will give her a better opinion of you. A little touch for the Church here, Philip, and just now is a good opportunity to

put in a little family pride—the Courcys deal in that largely—never mind the 'Lester' part, Philip—give that the go-by, and deal in 'Courcy blood' and 'Courcy brains'—that is good and rising stock just now, my son!'

"Looks like fawning and cringing and hypocrisy did you say, Philip? Does not the Apostle say to be all things to all men, so you may win some? Why, it is in the Epistle as plain as day, and how do you know but you may win these Courcys? At least you can win some of their money for the Church, and that will be highly creditable to you."

After a year of such training, Philip went to Northville very much less ingenuous than he once was, but nevertheless not nearly so bad as his teacher. He was to cultivate the Courcy friendship, but in his calls the Northville priest was to accompany him. This arrangement was not at all to Mrs. Courcy's mind. She could tolerate and welcome Padre Arnholm, because that priest knew how to behave himself like a gentleman—but she detested the Northville priest on account of his boorishness. Our lady judged people much by their manners—had she judged by morals she would have found little to choose between these priests, and nothing to be commended in either of them.

Looking at some rare flowers in the conservatory,

Magdalen told Philip that she believed the parish dignitary was a very bad man. Philip shook his head in discreet silence. It did not take him long to arrive at that conclusion himself, but he knew his business better than to speak against his superior.

Philip was naturally an acute youth—he was now sixteen years old, and had been educated among sharp people since his mother's death—sharpness had become with him a specialty. He was not slow to discover that the Northville incumbent was unsound with an unsoundness differing from the other priests. In a little pair of private mental balances, Philip had weighed different people of his acquaintance and found them wanting. According to his standard, Father Ansel, gayly as he concealed it, was unsound in faith, Father Arnholm in morals, and Brother Dominick in Church dogmas; Maria Felix was lacking in brain, and Mother Denny in charity; Ambrose the devout had been very especially wanting in honesty, and as Philip secretly watched and weighed the Northville priest, he felt more inclined to put him with Ambrose. This estimation he could not mention. Nothing but an overt act would make it safe for the young sub-deacon to accuse his priest.

And how did Maria Felix regard the coming of her nephew to Northville? Before he came, her unhappy doubts had nearly driven the poor nun wild.

Her eyes were restless, hollows came in her once calm round face, sighs were nearly as frequent as the breaths she drew, about her duties she moved wearily, and, though thus far she had escaped suspicion or accusation, she was daily in danger of drawing all the terrors of her Church upon her head by some indiscreet word or deed. But when Philip came, came light, came comfort. Daily she could see the boy whom she loved, in spite of her vows, with all the family devotion peculiar to her once persecuted and exiled race. It was a love born of days when Courcys had warred and suffered and died for each other, and the tie was not grown weak in this last offshoot of the old Huguenot family.

Daily, as Maria Felix saw Philip passing to and fro, her eyes brightened and her sighs grew less. At every service he was at his office in the church, and to those services some good seemed now to attach, and she rested in them somewhat as she had done in other years. Philip was a good boy, a wise boy, a boy well esteemed, and, if Maria Felix thought her own life blasted and thrown away, she could hope something better for her nephew.

At Mrs. Courcy's, Philip was continually more welcome. The lady of the house said he was "quite one of the family;" and she talked frequently of what she would do for him in money matters. But the acolyte's

endowment was delayed by the hesitation of Magdalen, who, while she was perfectly willing to give to Philip, was not willing to give to the Romish Church, and, as without Magdalen Mrs. Courcy could do nothing, the business waited. Philip meantime had nothing to do but obey Father Arnholm, cultivate the good graces of his cousins, and weekly confess to the priest all that they said to him and that he said to them; and so long as he did this, Father Arnholm had no fears of losing his neophyte.

This matter of confession, next to the dogma of purgatory, was Philip's stumbling-block. He could lay bare his own heart if he believed it his duty, but despite his Jesuit training he could not believe it was right to play the traitor and the spy, and to repeat every word of what two confiding friends had said to him to a man they especially disliked, albeit those words were not of much importance. Philip's manliness asserted itself, his pride and his resolution joined hands, and at his weekly confessions he withheld what he pleased, first about his friends, and then, by slow degrees gaining courage, about himself, quieting any latent uneasiness by the thought that he would unburden his whole mind to Father Arnholm at some future day.

The confessional is the grand foundation and throne of power to the Romish Church, and is of all things

most strenuously insisted upon, Rome's prelates knowing well that when fully operating it soonest kills the strength and dignity of the human soul, and keeps the spirit from its maturity, for ever trembling and tottering in leading-strings. But Philip from a sense of honor, that Jesuitism had not yet crushed out of existence in him, was foiling the intention of the confessional. At the same time, Maria Felix, morbid, doubting and instinctively shrinking from her new priest, was exercising a sort of dogged determination and reserve at her confessions, muttering over only some set forms, instead of revealing her whole thoughts, words and works. If this priest had been intent on his office and on his flock, he would soon have discovered this state of mind in two people who had very little guile about them; but he was not so intent and the confessional was but small trial. The prayer-book bids the devout Catholic "beware of relying too much on the interrogatories of his priest;" but Maria Felix, after settling a brief general form, relied very much on her confessor's questions, and answered "yes" and "no" quite indiscriminately. The prayer-book says, "banish fear and be contrite;"—Maria Felix was neither fearful nor contrite, but simply sulky and unbelieving. She read terrible things of mortal sin and the danger of dying therein; but she told herself that the Church

abandoned its holiest children to purgatory, and allowed them to die wretched and despairing, and could do no worse for her; and besides, the priest made it a rule to grant her absolution, and she could take it for whatever it was worth.

Thus we see that some of the Northville Romanists had not thrived spiritually, notwithstanding the liberality of the townspeople and the busy industry of the sisters. The establishment had however flourished financially. A new church was to be built, and a large amount had been raised for it, and the priest begged indefatigably to increase this sum, and took so great an interest in it, that most of his parishioners extolled him highly.

The priest carried in his pocket plans for church-building, and estimates of the cost of needed improvements: but Philip felt convinced that he carried far different plans and estimates in his head. He set himself quietly to watch his priest, and watching he discovered what served to confirm his suspicions. First, the priest became unusually anxious about collecting the amounts subscribed, and getting into his hands all promised sums. Next, he withdrew the money from the Northville bank, saying he meant to deposit it in the city, and yet Philip had almost positive proof that he did not so deposit it. By degrees all the valuables at the priest's house vanished from

their accustomed places, and one night Philip saw three large trunks carried from the dwelling to the express-office. Philip had a little hall bed-room at the priest's, and, hearing a noise below, he thrust his head from the window, and saw the priest on the door-step, lamp in hand, delivering the luggage to two express-runners. The three men and the three trunks were clearly visible in the circle of light below, and Philip strained his ear to catch directions, but the priest only said, "They are marked all right."

Next evening Philip went to visit his cousins. The priest declined going with him, saying he was sick; but when, much earlier than usual, Philip was returning home, he saw this same sick priest going into an office where were sold tickets and letters of exchange and credit for foreign travel.

Philip was now fully convinced that his superior meant to elope, and he resolved to take measures to defeat him. Yet, as the priest had advertised a special service for three days from that time, and had moreover a parishioner to bury, Philip, who was a poor plotter, did not think he could be going immediately, and therefore decided that he himself would take the first train to the city and lay his suspicions before Father Arnholm. But our acolyte had not a cent of money, and as he made this final resolution

he walked back to Mrs. Courcy, and for the first time in his life transacted a little business on his own account by borrowing ten dollars for four days.

Instead of grieving over his priest's duplicity, Philip felt important and elate, as about three o'clock in the morning he slipped out of the house to take an early train for the city. He knew very well that he was transgressing his limits in thus presuming to take any steps alone, but he thought the Jesuit rule, that the end justifies the means, would apply as well here as in other cases, and he also trusted to the partiality of his priestly friends.

As the train thundered along, a strange new sense of freedom rose up in Philip's heart. He felt like a *man* for the first time in his life. He was going somewhere of his own accord, unwatched, untrammeled, with money in his pocket, ideas of his own in his head—ah, this was a dangerous taste of freedom for an acolyte! Inspired by his new liberty, when about seven o'clock the city was reached, Philip went into an eating-house and bought himself a breakfast. It was not a first-class house, but ignorant Philip neither knew nor cared about that. The coffee was muddy, the ham strong, the eggs stale, and the bread underdone; but the manna that fed the fathers in the wilderness would not have been sweeter to his taste than this food; nectar and ambrosia could

not have competed with that bitter and creamless coffee ordered and paid for by himself.

The train had its depôt just upon the wharves, for the convenience of passengers and freight booked for ships and steamers. The eating-house was on the wharf also, and as Philip ate he saw the crowded masts, the ropes shining transmuted to gold in the warm sunlight, the little pennons streaming in the summer morning air, while from tall black pipes issued smoke and steam, and the bells gave warning that the boats were getting underway. These sights and sounds made Philip linger a little. He did not hasten as he had meant, although he took the shortest route which was along the wharves. By this route he passed the high back-wall of the House of Charity; —on over the line of docks, where, in the snowy winter midnight, Maria Felix had made her way alone after her sister's death, and so up Gabrielle street, meaning to strike Madonna street and thus reach the Church of the Madonna and Father Arnholm's house.

Gabrielle street was dingy, close and crowded with painful memories. Philip walked quickly enough there, and, springing along, ran full up against Father Arnholm and nearly upset him, at the door of Patrick Connor's house.

"Philip!" cried the priest, catching Philip with

one hand, while with the other he settled his clerical hat which the force of the concussion had knocked over his eyes.

"I was just going to your house, Father," said Philip. "I have very important business with you."

"How came you here alone, and where is your permit?"

"I hav'n't any, Father. I came to tell you something."

"This is no place to tell anything," said the priest sternly, and evidently disbelieving Philip. "This matter must be looked into, sir. It is well I met you. Walk up stairs before me—I have business here—and don't you go three feet from me at your peril."

Philip walked as directed, his face flushed, his eyes flashing, feeling much aggrieved and injured. He had done his best, and here he was scolded and suspected and frowned upon! As he thought thus, they reached the unlatched door of Patrick Connor's room, and there was a sight which chased Philip's selfish fretting far away. Death had been there and kissed away the breath of the fair little boy. The babe—sweet and white as the waxen child which is the nun's favorite Christmas toy—lay in its clean but coarse and scanty robe, the room darkened as well as with her paper curtains Mary could darken it, the

floor clean, the poor bed smooth, and over the little form a thin kerchief spread. At the foot of her dead child sat Mary Connor weeping, while Patrick stood with folded arms and face turned away. He could not look on what he had loved so well and lost so entirely. The poor man's one lamb was dead, and what had he more? The priest had pushed the door open by reaching his cane over Philip's shoulder, and the acolyte saw all this poverty and loss and woe at a glance.

Mary Connor sprang up at sight of her priest, and cried out, "Now may all the angels in heaven bless yer riverence—we thought you would desert us intirely, and it's our only darling has died without a prayer or a touch of holy water or holy oil, and is lying all this while like a heathen heretic without a blessed candle or anything to comfort the soul of him, barring the crucifix and the prayer-book I laid at his head and his feet—the Virgin bless him!"

Patrick turned about and made a low obeisance, holding out a chair, but the priest stood on the threshold, Philip just within, careful not to go more than the ordained three feet from him. Philip's liberty was gone, he was a prisoner, but this he forgot in beholding the grief of the bereaved parents. The priest was quite unmoved.

"Did you expect me to come to the death of a

child that was taken from you in judgment, as I often warned you? Do you think I bring the blessed candles to those who have turned from the holy Church and from me in obstinate heresy? No; let your child lie like a heretic, and be buried like a dog in unconsecrated ground!"

At these bitter words Mary Connor gave a loud cry, and flung herself on the foot of the bed, embracing and kissing her dead child's feet.

"We are not heretics, yer riverence, we did as well as we could, and obeyed you the best we knew, but to ask us to starve or go on the town, was more than flesh and blood could bear," said Patrick.

"Very well. The Scripture is that 'he that would save his life shall lose it,' and that 'it is better to save one's soul than to gain the whole world.' This is proved true in your case—your rebellion against me is punished in your child's death."

"Mebby it is, sirr; but do then forgive us and have pity on us when our hearts are breaking, and let us lay out our child and bury it as becomes a Christian," cried Mary, turning again to her priest.

"I'll work my best and so will she, and pay you all the fees, and the dues, and for masses enough, yer riverence. But the child died yesterday, and to-morrow it *must* be buried, and won't yer riverence do for us as for others?" said Patrick.

"No," said the obdurate priest, "your repentance comes too late. Your child's soul is like the soul of the unbaptized infant. I shall neither bless, bury nor say masses for it."

Mary gave a loud shriek, and springing past Philip fell on her knees and clasped the priest's gown with her trembling hands, and cried frantically—"Curse us, yer riverence, cut us off, but never curse the innocent child! Oh take it back, yer riverence—give it the blessings and offices for the Church, and every penny we earn to the day we die we will pay for the masses of its soul! Oh, don't be going, don't turn away. Come back, come back and have pity on the child!"

As well might an Egyptian mother utter her prayers to the stony ear of the sphinx that watches over the Nile. Father Arnholm gave Philip a pull, twitched his robe from the weeping mother's clasp, and turned away. Her pitiful cries and implorings followed him up Gabrielle street, and, awaking in Philip his own once bitter grief, made him sick at heart.

As they turned into Madonna street Philip recalled his own position and his mission, and, though secretly revolting from the cruelty of the man at his side, said humbly, "Father, may I tell you what brought me here?"

"You may speak, but I shall rest upon other evidence than your words," said the priest curtly.

This answer stung Philip, but he composed himself and said, "You know they have raised a great deal of money at Northville for a church, and I think the priest is going to run away to Europe with it."

Father Arnholm started as if he had trodden on a serpent—"Ah! Ha! what do you say, Philip!"

"He took it all out of the Northville bank, and said he was going to deposit it here in the Empire bank; but I believe he kept it in his own hands: and he sent off three heavy trunks night before last, and last night got a ticket to some foreign place."

"What! and you come thus late to tell!"

"I could not, dare not, accuse until I had proof," replied Philip, doggedly.

Father Arnholm muttered something like a curse, redoubled his speed and soon was with Philip at his own house. He took him to a small room and bade him sit down, saying, "Your conduct has made me suspicious, sir, I shall lock you in while I go to the Empire bank."

Philip threw himself in chair without replying, and was left alone some two hours. The day was sultry, the room was close, from heat and fatigue he fell asleep, and was aroused by the return of Father Arnholm accompanied by Father Ansel. They led

him to the library and questioned him over and over again about all the incidents of his Northville life, and all the facts that had caused him to suspect the priest.

"Very likely he is off already," said Ansel.

"Oh no," said Philip, innocently, "he had a man to bury to-day, and appointed a service for to-morrow."

"Fah, I'm sure he's gone now," said Ansel.

"Where did you get money to come?" asked Arnholm.

"From Mrs. Courcy—but I did not say why I wanted it."

"Did *he* know you were coming?"

"No, of course not—he would not have let me."

"Couldn't you have said you had a letter from me?"

"Why, I hadn't any," said Philip.

"Couldn't you have made one?"

"No, Father," replied the acolyte, blankly.

Father Ansel sneered—stretched himself in his chair—put his feet up on the table—"A fine Jesuit you are like to be," he said, contemptuously.

"You have acted like a perfect fool," said Arnholm, angrily. "Don't you see he'll take the alarm from your absence and start off at once? He's gone before this. Why couldn't you get off with a decent

reason to him, or why couldn't you have stayed there to watch him, and have sent me a telegram to come up quietly? You deserve to be locked up on bread and water for the next six months."

Overcome with fear and mortification, heart-broken at the sudden loss of his self-esteem, Philip buried his face in his hands and groaned aloud.

"Of all foolish, stupid, reckless, disobedient, idiotic performances, this is the worst," continued Arnholm, his anger waxing hotter and hotter.

"The boy deserves the stiletto, or the guillotine," said Ansel with a leer.

"How is that Courcy matter coming on?" demanded Arnholm.

"I don't know," said Philip, mournfully.

"If you fail in that"—began Arnholm—

"Don't look ahead," said Ansel—"he must come back with us to Northville, and we'll make as little noise as possible about this performance, for fear of the example to the other acolytes—I'll go up to the college for my valise."

"See here, then; just tell Dominick to go down to Connor's and see to that child, and bury it to-morrow. I've frightened them pretty thoroughly, and he must get down there now, or those Christian association folks will be taking the matter in hand, and making a row over it in the papers."

"Oh, Father Arnholm," burst out Philip, as Ansel left the room, "I'm so glad you're going to be kind to them—I thought you would—and if you'll only forgive me for making such a mess of this business I'll never do anything without orders again—I really forgot that there was such a thing as the telegraph, and I did not know what else to do but come to you."

"Obedience, son Philip, is better than sacrifice—obedience is the highest worship—obey, obey, obey—it is the key-note of our faith. Go now, for this once I forgive you."

In saying this Father Arnholm evidently felt that he was doing the benevolent most admirably, and far be it from Philip to think otherwise. With the padre's last words chimed the rattle of wheels, and Philip looking out of a window announced the bishop's carriage. Father Arnholm hastened to meet his prelate and conduct him to the drawing-room, where Ansel shortly after joined them, and their consultation lasted until the priest's carriage was at the door to take the party to the Northville train. As the trio emerged from the drawing-room, Philip, who hat in hand stood by the valises in the hall, heard the bishop say,

"Remember now, promise anything, agree to anything, only bring him back quietly, and without get-

ting the matter into the hands of the police to occasion a scandal, though if all else fails you can resort to that."

"No danger, the bird is flown," muttered Father Ansel.

It will take but a very small part of the time occupied by the return to Northville, to trace that course of Patrick Connor which had led him into such dire disgrace with his priest. The man had chafed and fretted under Arnholm's arrogant domination. He had been irregular at church, confession and the payment of his "dues." After many ecclesiastical visits and reproofs, the priest determined to attack the poor fellow through his pocket, and accordingly, as Patrick was driving hack for a man who was a member of the congregation at the Madonna, Arnholm ordered that he should be discharged. This being done, Patrick waited some time, waited until both cradle and rocking-chair were sold for food, and then got a place as porter in the establishment of one of those Christian association men to whom Father Arnholm was so inimical. This position Patrick would not resign unless something just as good was offered him, whereby he could support his family. For such *crimes* as these, Patrick and Mary were now refused religious consolation at the death of their only child.

As the day wore on Mary sat sobbing by the bed, her face buried in the pillow and her toil-hardened hand just touching the little cold fingers of her babe. Patrick had said, "Cheer up, woman; by dark I'll go to the boss and talk to him, and he'll help us a bit. I'll never believe yon priest has power over the soul that has gone out of the boy to destroy it, or that God will be hard on the little innocent for our ignorance. Don't you mind what they read here one time about the blessed Jesus calling the little children? Never fret, Mary, the boy's safe."

"Oh, but Patrick, you don't know as much as the priest, and mind what he said," replied Mary.

"I am minding it—it's burnt in the heart of me like hot lead—but I'll believe the boy's safe, spite of him."

There was a long silence, a silence broken at last by a mild voice pronouncing—"Benedicite!"

Patrick and Mary started up.

"This is a sad day to you, my children, but God visits us thus in mercy not in wrath, to draw our truant souls to him. It is well with your little child. 'Of such,' says the Son of Mary, 'is the kingdom of heaven,' and this little one was by baptism a member of the holy Church."

And now the blessed candles were lighted, the crucifix was laid on the baby-bosom, the holy water was

placed at the little golden head, and in that humble room sat Brother Dominick, and from the fullness of that which he had learned—not from the perverted dogmas of his Church, but from the Holy Spirit of God—he taught these two mourners that their child was at rest, that the glorified soul should be a new tie between their souls and heaven, that God does not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men, but telleth all their wanderings in sorrow's darksome mazes, and treasures all their tears. Speaking in this softening hour the thoughts of many lonely years, the good monk's teachings were precious truths, and but little of the dross of Romanism clung to the sacred gold.

In the summer twilight, Ansel, Arnholm and Philip hurried to the late dwelling of the Northville priest. The door was opened by the priest from an adjacent town, a man whom Philip had met occasionally.

"You got the bishop's dispatch then?" said Arnholm.

An hour later, and Fathers Ansel and Arnholm were pursuing their journey, following the track of their fugitive still northward, and Philip was safe in bed in his little room, the events of the last two days mingling and shifting in his dreams.

Two days more—meantime no one spoke of the

priest's flight, no one questioned—church matters ran smoothly in the old rut, thanks to Arnholm's judicious care that no disturbance should be created. The ringing of the door-bell at midnight roused Philip, and, as he knew that the priest now in the house was partially deaf and also a heavy sleeper, he rose, dressed himself, and hurried down stairs, holding a small lamp. As he drew the bolts, three priests stepped into the hall — the fugitive was captured then! Philip led the way into the sitting-room, and set the lamp on the table. Hearing a choking sigh, and turning, he saw the recreant priest had sunk into a chair, his eyes starting and his face drawn and ghastly pale. Such a terror was on his countenance that Philip shivered and trembled on the hot summer night as if exposed to December cold. Had some terrible, coming doom glared on the unhappy defaulter in the semi-darkness, as thus a disgraced captive he returned to his home?

The miserable wretch grasped Arnholm's sleeve, "You remember, you know what you promised."

"Certainly, be calm, I remember."

The priest fumbled at his pocket, drew out a slip of paper, and held it near the lamp, "Yes, yes, this is the bishop's pardon signed by himself, if I return quietly, and I *have* returned."

"And the money's all right but the fifty you

spent, and that we will make up," said Ansel. "Philip! what are you standing there for? to bed!"

The next morning the church funds were re-deposited in the bank, and the three priests proceeded to the city.

The wide-eyed horror, the ghastly pallor had never left the poor sinner's face. Again and again Philip heard him whisper, "You know what you promised me, and I have the bishop's pardon!" but it was evident that in his heart had begun an agony worse than death.

Ansel was sent back to Northville as the regular priest of that parish, he had ground broken for the new church, and began to carry matters with a high hand.

"I don't mind telling you, Philip—it may be a warning—how we got that runaway," he said. "He was off when we reached there—his steamer had been gone eight hours—I was just going to follow him by the next ship, when back comes the Clyde, her machinery out of order, and there is our man right in our hands. Heaven! Philip, when we opened the cabin-door his knees knocked together, his teeth chattered in his head, he was like a man with a knife in his heart, the sweat rolled over his face!" Ansel evidently enjoyed the memory and the description. "We had just two offers—come quietly

along, all will be right, here's the bishop's pardon if you hand over the money and come back to him, it was a slight insanity and will be overlooked—or, here's an officer and we take you in custody, and there's your trial, conviction, State's-prison and church censure. He fell on the floor and writhed and howled, but we let the fit pass off and he came along."

"The best he could do, and very good of the bishop to forgive him. Will he have a church again?" said Philip, the credulous.

"I rather think not," said Ansel, queerly.

"But he is forgiven!" said Philip, with strange suspicions.

"Forgiven! ha, ha! the world is wide and the Church is wise!" said Ansel.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DAUGHTER OF A HUGUENOT.

"THE world is wide, and the Church is wise," said priest Ansel; and in this wide world and this wise Church we have now to follow three ruined and sorrowful lives to their bitter end. But the world's wideness is not all bitterness, and we shall see how one life, narrowed and sorrowful here, was lifted into heaven's eternal joy; how out of darkness went our young acolyte to the shining places of this world, and how one poor life-bark drifted past the whirlpools, the storms and the shallows, and made harbor, disabled and well-nigh wrecked, but floating still.

While Philip had been watching and his priest had been planning, while both the acolyte and the priest had been condemned, subdued and put to shame by those superior spirits, Ansel and Arnholm, no small stir had been caused in Northville by the disappearance of Viola Hastings. Full eight hours after Viola had been placed in Mother Vallé's hands, Mr. Hastings called at Mrs. Courcy's to inquire why

his daughter's visit there was so prolonged. When he learned on what pretext she had left their friends, he realized at once to what her folly had led her.

"The girl is lost!" he cried. "Oh, I might have known this—Judith warned me!"

Before this, Magdalen had only seen Mr. Hastings as the active and absorbed man of business. He was one of the trustees of her late father's estate, and she supposed she knew him well; but now the pale face, the trembling lips, the eyes blinded by tears, and finally his moans of distress, as completely overcome he buried his face in his hands, revealed to her a depth of fatherly love and anxiety which she had never suspected. Oh, how could Viola have so cut that tender father to the heart?

"Mr. Hastings," said Magdalen, "if Viola has gone to a convent it must be to 'Our Lady of Seven Sorrows,' and surely if you go there and let her see how you feel about her conduct, she will come back with you."

"By all means rouse yourself and go to the city," said Mrs. Courcy. "If you go to 'Seven Sorrows' assuming that she is there, you will not be far wrong."

It was evident that this was the only course open to Mr. Hastings for the recovery of his child; and pursuing it, he next day found himself ringing at the door of "Seven Sorrows."

"Mother Vallé does not see visitors," said the nun who showed half her face at the inner door.

"But I have business with her."

"This is not a secular house, and the superior has no business with strangers," was the answer.

"I am Mr. Hastings of Northville," said the heavy-hearted father, "and if I cannot be permitted to see either Mother Vallé or my daughter, who entered here yesterday, I shall apply to the court and come here with a police-officer."

The nun replied to this, that she would mention the matter to Mother Vallé, but that he was probably mistaken about his daughter being in that house. After an interval of waiting which seemed long to Mr. Hastings, and in which he repented that he had come to "Seven Sorrows" alone, the nun returned and told him that in consideration of his business, he might see the abbess, and thus saying led him to the gloomy parlor. The abbess sat in a particularly gloomy corner, her white face with the white folds bound about it turned in the shadow to her guest. The sister who had opened the door gave Mr. Hastings a chair, then crossed the room and stood during the interview apparently absorbed in the contemplation of a black and gilt crucifix upon a table.

"I come," said Mr. Hastings bluntly to the superior, "to see about my daughter. She left her

home to come to this place, and, as she came against my will, I have followed her to bring her back."

"Have you any evidence that she reached here?" asked Mother Vallé, chillily.

"I know she is here, and I wish to see her."

"For what was she coming here?"

"She was resolved to be a nun, a plan to which I will never consent," said Mr. Hastings.

"And what age is your daughter?" asked the calm superior.

"She is seventeen or eighteen, I suppose."

"I shall not deny, sir, that your daughter is here," said Mother Vallé, slowly, "nor that she came resolved to enter the holy sisterhood. Your daughter, sir, has reached an age when the law makes her her own mistress, and permits her to judge for herself. She is past her eighteenth birthday, and you have no authority over her to interfere with her religious convictions. You will permit me, sir, to be much surprised that when your child shows such holy intentions, when she desires to set herself beyond all the temptations of a wicked world, and give herself to the practice of piety, you should desire to prevent her."

"I wish, madam, to see my daughter, and speak with her of this infatuation."

"I shall not prevent your speaking to her if she

is willing to come," said the superior. "Daughter, go and inquire if the postulant, Viola, is *willing* to see her father."

The nun who was inspecting the crucifix slowly left the room. Not a word was spoken during her long absence. She finally returned alone, saying that Viola did not wish to see her father.

"Not see me!" cried Mr. Hastings.

"She says it will only make them both unhappy," said the nun, steadily addressing her superior. "She sends him her love and duty, and will with your permission write him a long letter making known all her feelings. She hopes some day to be able to see him, but is now too much disturbed to do so."

"You hear what your daughter says," remarked Mother Vallé, turning to her guest; "and her reply is wise and kind. You are both excited now, and the interview would only make trouble."

"Go tell my daughter," cried Mr. Hastings to the nun, "that on her duty to me as her father I command her to come."

The superior nodded, and again the nun left the room. Again she returned and addressed her message to the abbess.

"Sister Viola hopes she is not lacking in duty to her father, but she has a duty to the Church and to

her own soul; she wishes for the present to be left to pious meditations, and her letters will fully explain her feelings and intentions. She sends her dear love to her father and the family, and will remember them in her prayers."

"I tell you," cried Mr. Hastings, starting up, "that I *will* see my daughter."

"And pray, sir, what am I to do?" asked the abbess. "Twice you have sent for your daughter, a person of legal age, and twice she declines to see you. Pray, sir, are we to use violence? Are we to lay hands on this young woman and drag her before you? Sir, we cannot be guilty of such cruelty."

"I shall appeal to the law!" cried Mr. Hastings.

"And for what? I tell you your daughter came here of her own free will; she of her own free will refuses to see you; she promises to write to you; what more can I do for you, or can the law do for you? She is of legal age, and I do not know that she is under any obligation to come before you."

"She is at any age under obligation to obey and respect me as her father!" cried Mr. Hastings.

"That, sir," said the abbess, freezingly, "you should have taught her long ago."

"Can I not go where she is and see her?" asked Mr. Hastings, after a little silence spent in calming himself.

"That, sir, is utterly impossible—quite against the rules of the institution," said the abbess.

"Will you not then, as superior of this house, order my daughter to come to us?"

"I never can conflict with any person's convictions of duty, or force her known inclinations," said the crafty abbess.

"Will you not go yourself, then, and reason with her about at least coming to hear what I have to say?"

"To show you my entire good-will, I can do so," said the abbess, and with the nun she left the room. This errand did not occupy much time. The abbess came back alone.

"Your daughter cannot bring herself to see you—she is much agitated and fears you will be unkind to her—she says her mind is made up and that she will explain her views in a letter—I have now done all I can for you, sir, and must bid you good-day—our rules do not allow long interviews."

After that, Mr. Hastings had only to go back to Northville, ascertain from his Family Record that Viola was really of legal age, and then wait for a letter. His friends said he looked ill, that he grew old rapidly, that his hair was turning gray wonderfully fast. Poor Mrs. Hastings, already worn out

by this girl whom she had been unable to manage, took to her bed sick of a fever.

And now what had really been Viola's part in the matter of her father's visit at the "Seven Sorrows?" When the nun came to her telling her that her father was in the parlor desiring to see her, her first emotion was terror.

"Oh, how can I see him? He will take me home; he will be so angry," she cried, seizing the nun's hand.

"How can he take you, or even see you unless you wish?"

"What!" cried Viola, catching at this clue, "will I not have to see him!"

"You must do as you think you ought," replied the nun, withdrawing her hand from Viola's clasp.

"But you will tell me what I *ought* to do."

"It might draw you back to worldly things; it would distract you from present duties, and studies, if you see him. It might be better to write to him, and then it is an early opportunity to show your steadfastness."

"Well then, sister, I'd better not see him. Say so for me; say I had rather not, but I will write, and" —she added, relenting as the nun turned to go— "tell him not to be angry, but give him my love."

When the nun came the second time, she said,

"Mother Vallé wishes to know if you have freely

concluded not to see your father, and if you are perfectly willing, and ready to abide in this house."

"Surely I mean to stay here," said Viola; "but about father—how does he seem?"

"Terribly angry—I never saw a man more violent, and talks of arresting you." She said no word of Mr. Hastings' "command."

"But you won't let him! Oh, sister, how horrible that would be, you will surely protect me," said the foolish girl.

"There now, Sister Viola, he cannot harm you if you are firm about your duty—you are of age and he cannot force your actions—he will calm down after a while, so you can see him quietly."

"Well, sister, and until then I can write to him."

By this time Viola was really afraid of meeting her father, and her terror was increased when Mother Vallé came accompanied by the nun. She rushed to her and threw her arms about her, crying, "Oh, Mother Vallé! what is going to be done?"

"Nothing, my child," said Mother Vallé, withdrawing from an embrace which was exceedingly distasteful to her. "I come to encourage you in your piety and obedience. Do you adhere to your resolution not to be turned from the life of your choice by the commands of your angry father?"

"Yes, Mother," said Viola.

"You indeed give evidence of your sincerity and of the reality of your vocation," said the superior, "and I hope your example will be followed by some who are less devout and obedient." The superior looked around upon the postulants, and, encouraged by this commendation and the pre-eminence accorded her, Viola wiped the tears that were just about to fall at thought of her father, and allowed him to go heart-broken on his way.

In all her management of Viola, Mother Vallé had shown herself equal to her position. It was not necessary to use force with Viola, for the girl was as infatuated as the abbess could desire. She was of age to choose, and the more seeming freedom of choice she was permitted to exercise, the stronger was the hold which the superior of the "Seven Sorrows" had upon her. She was obstinate and self-willed, and the more she could be led to commit herself, the surer was Mother Vallé of her prey. There are some fish so easily caught that no bait is needed for the hook. Of this class was Viola—of this class are ten thousand ignorant and willful girls, who need only be where Rome casts out her hook to become her prize.

With a sardonic smile, Mother Vallé reflected how much more cruel was Mr. Hastings' grief at being refused an interview with his child when that refusal seemed to come from the child herself, and how

Mother Vallé had triumphed in her parade of perfect calmness and fairness. The letter that had been promised must surely be written; it would be another sorrow to the afflicted father, it would be additional proof of the disinterestedness of the abbess, and of the freedom accorded to her proselyte. If Viola's letter were not entirely to Mother Vallé's liking, it could be easily improved. During a few days immediately following her father's visit to the convent, Viola was petted and praised by Mother Vallé, and was allowed to tell the other postulants long tales of the indifference of her stepmother, of the partiality her father showed to the younger children, and of the violent opposition to her new faith which had almost broken her heart; and in response, the nuns suggested arguments which might be used against her parents. Viola was thus unconsciously in training for the famous document which was to vindicate her conduct to her family. The letter was written at last, Viola sitting between two nuns and consulting them at every sentence and reading what she had written for their approval.

The letter being written, it was carried to Mother Vallé. Had it not suited that excellent woman, it would have been easy to write another, as the superior had sisters on hand versed in every kind of penmanship. But Viola's letter was all that the su-

perior could desire, and it was forthwith posted to Northville.

Was anything lacking to Mr. Hastings' utter grief and shame and vain regret, this letter from Viola filled the measure. He carried it around with him for several days until he had learned it by heart—and in that learning had grown wonderfully bowed and melancholy and gray—and then he gave it to Magdalen, whom he met one evening as she was going home.

Magdalen took the letter to her mother. It was a lovely August evening; the garden before the bow-window where they sat was a rare broidery of fragrant bloom; the birds were twittering to their nests, which were numerous in the safe stillness about the Courcy place; the sun had sunk in purple and gold, and up the sky shot long crimson beams; and the river, slipping in faint music through its banks of green, glowed like a stream of fire. In all this beauty of a world which Viola had rashly quitted, in all this safety and sweetness and loving companionship of home-life, which the reckless girl was abjuring for ever to her bitter cost, Magdalen read the letter to her mother, making comments as she read. Viola began by hoping her father would forgive her for not seeing him when he called; she did not wish to pain him, but must follow her convictions of duty

—"and if you'll observe, mother," said Magdalen, "it is always a nun's duty to trample upon the fifth Commandment." Viola "desired her father to accept her respectful love, but it would be better for them not to meet at present, and" (ah, here was a wicked and spiteful thrust, suggested, we must tell you, by one of the sisters) Viola "supposed her father did not care very much; he had never seemed especially pleased to see her at home"—"how cruel that is," said Magdalen. "It made me heartsick to see Mr. Hastings when he handed me that letter." Viola went on to say that home-life was not very pleasant to her; she felt crowded out of her legitimate place by the troop of little sisters; she was too old to be interfered with, and restrained; the labors that had fallen upon her at home jarred on her taste, and she felt it her duty to devote her life to piety and good works.

"Here's a lovely tissue of absurdities," said Magdalen; "four sisters at home crowd her so much that she goes where there are forty; a perfectly happy home-life is so dear to her that because she does not find such perfection, she means never to have any home again; she is too old to be restrained, so she is going where abject obedience is the chief requirement, where she can neither eat, drink, walk, work, sleep, nor speak, without permission; her home-duties jar on her good

taste, so she is going to a barren and bitter life of servile occupations, where whatever is most revolting will be most surely thrust upon her, and where constant self-abnegation is demanded; and as for the piety and good works here's a fine way to begin them, by lying, disrespect and disobedience. You needn't think I'm hard on her, mother, she is ten times as hard on herself, and I know she'll rue the day when she took sharp-faced Mother Vallé in exchange for mild little mother Hastings."

"Yes, poor girl," said Mrs. Courcy, stooping forward to twist a spray of scarlet geranium, lying on its crimped and fragrant green leaf, into her daughter's luxuriant brown hair, "and this is such an irremediable step! From almost any other false step there is a retreat. Had she run away to work for herself, she could have come home whenever she got tired of it; had she married some smooth-tongued rascal, the law or his death might have made her free, or her father's house might have been her refuge; but from the convent there is no escape, of its miseries no alleviation. I never thought so until I noticed that poor little Josepha;—I felt that she was dying by inches of homesickness, pining for tenderness and freedom and mother-care;—she made me think of a poor little fluttering wounded bird, in the jaws of a cat!"

"Why really, my mother, you are coming out quite clearly, and in a fashion worthy of your daughter, against the convent system!" said Magdalen. "Now here are some of Viola's arguments for her new faith;—'It is the pure faith of the true and original Church—all other Churches are offshoots from the Catholic, and wherein they differ from it they are wrong, and inasmuch as they differ entirely they are entirely wrong. Christ says of his Church, The gates of hell shall not prevail against it, dividing the world into two classes, the Church and the gates of hell, and therefore Protestantism is the gates of hell, for no one can dispute that the Church of Rome is the true, pure and eternal Church of Christ.'"*

"Nonsense, I don't admit that at all," said Mrs. Courcy.

"Certainly not; a child could overthrow such a flimsy argument. The conclusion would be right if the premises were not entirely wrong. Here is Viola's next argument. 'The Protestant Churches have done a great wrong in rejecting part of the canon of Scripture, they have in rejecting God's revelation rejected him.' Only hear that, mother! when the popes and the councils call the Bible a poisonous

* Weniger's argument in "Treatise on the Infallibility of the Pope."

book, not fit to be read, against their consciences, and calculated to lead men astray! Because Protestants reject the Apocrypha, Viola must go over to Rome and be denied the privilege of having a Bible at all!"

"Well read on!" said Mrs. Courcy, with a sigh of resignation.

"She says that 'Protestants are guilty of great irreverence toward Christ as they do not bow at the mention of his name, and do not pay homage to his image and his cross.' Just as if she were going to better herself by going over to a Church which appropriates to a *woman* the titles of God, the office of Christ, and the work of the Spirit!"*

"I wonder where Viola found these arguments?" said Mrs. Courcy.

"From the sisters; I dare say some of them dictated the whole letter," said Magdalen, and, as we know, the surmise of this acute young woman was perfectly correct.

"There is Philip at the gate," said Mrs. Courcy. "Perhaps you had better put the letter by. How does she finish it?"

"By saying that she is perfectly happy, is at rest in the performance of duty, and will never cease to pray for the conversion of her family."

Closely following Philip were two ladies to visit

* The Pope's encyclical letter of date August 15, 1832.

Mrs. Courcy, and presently Magdalen wrapped a fleecy cloud of crochet-work about her head and shoulders and strolled out with her cousin to the garden.

"I was just reading a letter from Viola Hastings," said Magdalen. "Do you think it was right for her to run away as she did and cause her parents such suffering?"

They stood on either side of a tuberose which was filling with its perfume the moist evening air. Philip looked down at the flower. Magdalen broke off a blossom and tapped him with it on the hand, saying, "Philip!" He looked up and met her clear dark eyes reading his thoughts. That steadfast look forced the truth from the young Jesuit.

"No, she was wrong," he answered.

They left the tuberose and passed on where a stately yucca shot up a pyramid of white bells, towering far above their heads.

"Philip," said Magdalen, "are women better and happier for being nuns? Are their lives broader and richer and greater blessings? Has Viola done well to herself to choose that lot?"

"Miss Hastings," Philip made answer, "is of a selfish, unsatisfied disposition, which would not be happy anywhere."

"You evade my question," said Magdalen.

Magdalen broke off a blossom and tapped him with it on the hand, saying, 'Philip!'"

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"That fretfulness and selfishness the convent will repress," said Philip.

"But what avails that repression? The convent will crowd those feelings back to corrode her own heart. Had she remained where God placed her, subjected to the wise discipline of the mingled joys and sorrows of a natural life, her restlessness would have softened into busy care for others, and her selfishness have been lost in love and hope. Speak to me honestly, Philip! Are women in convents happy and good?"

"There must be nuns I suppose," said Philip, "as there must be sisters and daughters and mothers and wives."

"Not at all; these last positions were ordained of God, the conventual system comes of man, and blessed would it be for this and every country if the strong hand of the law* abolished it or curtailed its privileges, for now it is a shameful infringement of social and property rights—it is a vile robbery, oppression, slavery and despotism!"

A bitterer word might have been added, but Magdalen was innocent and young; she paused, the fire in her dark eye melted into its usual light, and the breast that heaved in excitement under the fleecy

* In this Mexico is in advance of the United States. See letter of Colonel J. Mendez to "The Christian World."

wrappings grew calm. They had passed away from the yucca's pyramid of beauty, and were losing themselves in the shadows of a long arbor, clad with grape-vines.

"Speak truth to me, Philip, for I deal in nothing else," said Magdalen—"how much better would *I* be if I were a nun?"

As they passed down the twilight of the arbor Philip tried to imagine his companion in the straight garb, the white folds, the paleness, the subdued melancholy, the premature age, and the black overshadowing bonnet of a nun;—and when they came out into the softening rose-tint of the dying day, Philip looked at his cousin in all the charm of her youth and beauty, standing among the flowers of the garden fair enough to be their queen, a rare young goddess among a frail mortal race, and he cried out,

"You a nun, Magdalen! never, never! you had far better die, die as you are, and be buried among the flowers, than to live when all that makes life sweet has been for ever thrown away."

He checked himself, startled at what he had said. Magdalen smiled.

"Rome has not banished all the spirit of our race from you, cousin Philip," she said, "and do not take back anything which you have said to me—see, we

stand 'under the rose,' "she added, pointing to a climbing monthly rose which flung out its crimson streamers above their heads, "and you know I have no confessor to whom I must reveal all that you say to me. I may feel sure that it is your duty to repeat my words to Father Ansel, so that indeed I might as well talk to him as to you; but I shall never play you false."

This plain insinuation roused Philip's pride and manly spirit.

"I am not so given over to my confessor as you seem to think, Magdalen," he said, flushing. "I may have a duty to him and to myself, but there is also a duty to my friends and a respect for the laws of hospitality, in which I should despise myself if I were deficient. I do not come here to be a traitor and a spy"—then remembering that it was his priest who had first introduced him to his cousins, and that with an avowedly selfish end, he flushed still more, and added, "If my superior *did* first bring me here, and advise a friendship, believe me I have learned to prize for themselves the friends I have found, and no confessor is able to deprive me of them."

"There is your confessor now, Philip, coming in at our front gate. Let us go and meet him. I must make friends with him, or he may not let you come here any more," said Magdalen.

"I shall always come, unless you forbid me!" cried Philip.

Magdalen laughed—"That depends upon how you behave yourself, and whether you always speak the truth—as you have to-night,"—and so saying, she went swiftly forward to welcome Father Ansel as he entered from the street, leaving Philip to follow her slowly between borders of pinks and clusters of lilies.

In Philip's young imagination his two years older cousin had rivaled the Virgin, the recent idol of his soul. It was as if the Virgin had stepped in all her glowing beauty out of her frame, had become instinct in life, perfect in grace, light of heart and sweet of speech, and he could still adore her devoutly and afar off. As a good Catholic, Philip still worshiped Mary, but in very truth gave more than half his thoughts to Magdalen. He doted upon beauty, pined for friendship, and had never before had a companion of nearly his own age. Had Philip been a less devout and ardent Romanist, the dangers of the young heretic's fascination would have been more apparent to his priest. But Father Ansel was secure in the latent power of his Church as well as in his own inquisitorial guardianship, and did not despair of at length winning Magdalen, as Viola, for Rome. He considered Magdalen an ornament of society, but that

the ornament should be a thinking and independent mind, systematically opposed to Romanism and guilty of the enormity of sapping the foundations of the young acolyte's faith, had not yet occurred to him.

Philip now joined them, and the three entered the parlor where Mrs. Courcy sat alone, her guests having left her. Father Ansel engaged his hostess in conversation, and the two young people withdrew to the other side of the room to play a game of chess.

A single gas-jet softened by a porcelain shade shed light over their heads, as, bending above the mosaic chess-table, they moved the white and scarlet pieces, intent upon their game.

"Those two are very alike," said Father Ansel—"the same in complexion and feature."

"Yes, he looks Courcy enough to have been my son—what a pity he is not!" said Mrs. Courcy.

"In whatever duty and affection he can be a son to you, and not less a son to that Church, which was the succorer and mother of his orphanage, you may be sure he will not lack," said Father Ansel.

"That brings me to a subject upon which I wish to speak with you," said Mrs. Courcy. "Not long ago, needing to make a hasty journey, Philip borrowed of me ten dollars. It hurt my feelings greatly that one of the Courcys should be without such a paltry sum as ten dollars to use at need, and I wish

to make some pecuniary arrangements for Philip which shall obviate such another necessity. Philip must have settled upon him an income suitable to his age and position."

During these remarks, Father Ansel became more than ever blandly attentive, and more elegant in position. In Mrs. Courcy's parlor he was not, as in Arnholm's room, the sprawling priest, lounging at full length in a great chair or putting his feet upon the table while he drank a glass of brandy; on the contrary, with long robe falling in graceful folds, with spotless neck-tie and cuffs, with a subdued melancholy of voice, and a mild glance that only occasionally searched the faces of his acquaintances and was then deferentially lowered, this charming Father Ansel was the beau-ideal of a priest.

Many games of chess had been played, and Philip and Magdalen had left the mosaic table for the piano, and had sung together for an hour, before Mrs. Courcy's business with the priest was concluded, and he called Philip to accompany him home. The reverend Father was in high good-humor. Mrs. Courcy had stated that she would settle on her young cousin six hundred a year for the present, and had even handed the first half-yearly payment to the priest and taken a receipt for it. At some future time, Mrs. Courcy said, this allowance would be increased, and

it was likely that an arrangement would be perfected for giving Philip ten thousand dollars when he became of age—very much depended upon Magdalen, who would be more likely to be liberal to Philip if he were retained in Northville. So well pleased was Father Ansel that going home he could smile and jest over a letter which had greatly vexed him when he came up to Mrs. Courcy's—a letter from the bishop stating that Brother Dominick would be sent to Northville to remain for one month. This Ansel told Philip.

"Ar'n't you glad of it?" said Philip. "He is so good."

"So good! that is just it," cried Ansel, pettishly—"he is so superlatively pious that he is an unmitigated bore—and he is so credulous. He isn't more than half sound on doctrine, and can never be trusted anywhere alone; but that is more the fault of his head than his heart. His imprisonment shook him. You would not think now that he had once been a fiery fellow, and is still younger than I am. I told you he wasn't more than half sound, so you need not take his deliverances for the deliverances of the Church. It is the *piety* he is great on, and is tolerated for. It impresses people. Brother Dominick's piety has got us many a good dollar from Protestants—though the old fellow himself doesn't know it—and the bishop

thinks he will have a particularly good effect on the Northville people, raise up the reputed piety of our Church, and maybe bring over the Courcys. As for myself, I am better on business than on piety,"—and as Ansel spoke he unlatched the gate of his own yard and with Philip entered the house.

Mrs. Courcy would doubtless have been angry to see a scion of her boasted family performing for Father Ansel the offices of a menial; but these were part of our acolyte's duties. He lighted the lamp, brought chair, wrapper and slippers, filled and presented the padre's meerschaum, and then went to the cellar for a dish of peaches. He returned with some inferior fruit, saying that the maid-servant had made way with all the good ones; and at this news Father Ansel benevolently wished the maid-servant "so far in purgatory that all the masses of the Church would not be able to reach and rescue her."

When Philip had waited upon Father Ansel, he took a peach and a chair by the window.

"My hands will be full enough with Brother Dominick," said Ansel, puffing out a volume of smoke. "He will get here day after to-morrow, and though he does well enough for the common people, being particularly strong on honesty, industry and obedience, he has some notions which expose us to the ridicule of the intelligent; and he does not know when to

keep his ideas to himself. For example, Philip, our Church has pious beliefs which are suitable to the credulous and the ignorant, but which are wholly untenable and should never be presented to the educated, as they expose us to scorn. Now Brother Dominick believes in charms, amulets and relics. He receives these beliefs because the 'Church says so,' without considering that the Church 'says so,' only for one class. As to the relics, for instance, Philip, Dominick believes there are at Cologne and at Milan such relics as the skulls of the three kings led by the star to Bethlehem, the tomb of eleven thousand martyred virgins! two teeth of Elisha, the rod of Moses, fragments of Abraham, Jonas, Daniel and Zachariah, teeth of Saint Stephen, a nail from the cross and four thorns from the crown, Christ's towel, swaddling-clothes and grave sheet, the beard of Zechariah, the bones of Peter and the ashes of Paul!! Now if he tells such stuff at the Courcys', he will simply disgust them."

"And have you no belief in these things?" asked Philip.

"If I have, it is microscopic, and quite invisible to the naked eye," said Father Ansel.

"But I heard you preach about these relics only three weeks ago," said Philip.

"May the saints deliver me, Philip! is it possible

that you listen to sermons and remember them three weeks!" cried Father Ansel, laughing.

"What else am I in church for?" asked the acolyte.

"To learn your future duties, and aid in impressing the common people. Look you, Philip, I was preaching to the common people, who need these rude and carnal things to catch their wandering attention and fix their gross affections. You know it says in the gospel this people which knoweth not the law are cursed, and a doltish cursed set they are, Philip, only fit to get church money from, and make an army for our use when we come to need one. There is not one in ten of the pork and cabbage-eating crew that is worth praying out of purgatory."

"But, Father Ansel," urged this acolyte, "they have souls, and it really seems singular for the True Church to feed the souls of her children on fiction."

"That is because they have not brains enough to digest truth," said the priest. "'Milk for babes, and strong meat for men,' says the Epistle. I am seriously uneasy about you, Philip—you have no tact—you are no casuist—you have a blundering fondness for truth, and a vilely ignorant way of speaking it on all occasions, suitable or otherwise. You will never be fit for a parish priest unless you change; you will not make a judicious preacher, and I am afraid you

will never be suitable for a professor. We should consider that you had missed your vocation, had not Mrs. Courcy given you six hundred a year and promised you ten thousand when you come of age, and, Philip, money covereth a multitude of sins."

"Six hundred a year!" said Philip.

"Yes, as your share of your grandmother's rightful estate. They ought to do the same for Sister Maria Felix, but that heretical little Magdalen will not settle property on a nun. Here is the money. Of course it belongs to the Church as your guardian and nourisher; but, as Mrs. Courcy is hurt and offended at your not having money, there are two five-dollar bills, which I hope you will be careful not to spend. And be sure you do not explain to Mrs. Courcy, while thanking her for her liberality *and justice*, that the income is not for your handling."

Philip spent half that night pondering on the duplicity of Father Ansel, and wondering if he must attain thereto, in attaining to the priesthood.

The following morning Philip entered the parlor where Ansel had been writing to Dominick. The priest had gone to the post-office with his letter, and as Philip placed a vase of flowers on the desk he saw a sheet of foolscap lying on the floor under it. He picked it up, and saw at the top a pardon written in Father Ansel's hand, and covering the transgression

of the Northville priest. Under this the same pardon, signed with the bishop's name and the official "dagger," was written several times in a carefully changing hand until at last, the elaborate study completed, Father Ansel had succeeded in getting an exact imitation of the bishop's writing—Philip realized at once that Ansel, taken at a disadvantage in his capture of the priest, had forged a pardon to get him quietly in custody, and here was his paper of practice.

As he stood, yet looking, shocked and revolted at the forgery, he heard Ansel's step on the gravel-walk, and instinctively he felt that if Ansel found him there with the paper he would be his enemy for ever. His too great knowledge must be concealed. He dropped the paper, caught up his bouquet and leaping through the open back window took refuge behind a clump of lilac bushes.

Hidden there, he saw Ansel enter the parlor and at once notice the written page. He watched the priest as he took it up, heard him utter an angry oath at his own carelessness, and saw him tear the paper in strips, light a match with a scratch against the wall, and, when the long fragments of paper were burnt down to his fingers, drop out of the front window their blackened ashes, now no longer able to tell a tale of treachery.

CHAPTER XII.

DUNGEON DISCIPLINE.

WHEN Ansel came to Northville he resolved to aggrandize his parish that he might aggrandize himself.

He planned a fine church, and would here have fine music and pictures. He canvassed his congregation thoroughly, forcing every child into the sisters' school, and denouncing the severest temporal and eternal penalties against all who allowed sons or daughters to be educated in the public schools. He girded up himself like a man to do battle against Miss Judith Vaughn, forbidding his people to receive either her instructions or her tracts; and so frequent and searching were his inquisitorial visits, that tracts and instruction soon became scarce among his subjects. He triumphantly told Philip that he had collected Bibles enough to furnish fuel to cook his breakfast for three mornings, and, lest his maid-servant should be contaminated by them, he had fed the stove himself. The rule of the House of Saint Vincent de Paul became more strict. An addition as large as the original

house was to be built. Twelve boarders were added to the day-scholars, and among them eight children of Protestants came to the sisters' school to pay high prices for inferior teaching. As Josepha was dead and her successor not to Father Ansel's mind, he had Saint Pauline Anna sent from the House of Charity as head teacher of the school, and her arrival, her experience and her abilities as a teacher were duly announced in the Northville paper. With Brother Dominick were to come four more nuns for Saint Vincent de Paul, one of whom was to supersede Sister Maria Felix, with whom Father Ansel said "something was wrong, and he hoped Brother Dominick could find out what it was."

Father Ansel's house was church property, and he had a fine garden, not that he cared for flowers, but they were needed in the church, were attractive to visitors, and it had a good effect on the townspeople he thought to see the church property in fine order. The garden was no care to the priest, for Philip spent several hours each day working in it, and improved his varieties of plants by choice importations from Mrs. Courcy's grounds.

After the morning service in the church and some time spent among flower-beds and borders, Philip devoted himself to his studies. With French, German and Italian he was becoming well acquainted,

being taught by Dominick, Ansel and Arnholm, each in his native tongue. Latin he studied assiduously, but it was ecclesiastical Latin, Romish Latin, and Philip's knowledge would have been below par in a Protestant college. In natural sciences our acolyte was deficient; but in music and rhetoric he flourished amazingly, and the Jesuit casuistry he could quote glibly, though truth to say it yet had no lodging-place in his heart.

The great clump of lilac bushes behind the parlor was his favorite resort, and there he had fashioned himself a seat. The leaves screened him from the sun, the winds breathed poetry into his ears, the birds sung and built unfearingly close beside him, the bees whirred honey-laden near his book, the flowers unfolded in his sight, to him all nature ministered, and hour after hour he sat among the lilacs, his book upon his knees, and the error that came to him through false doctrines on the written page was neutralized by the fair lines written in the great book of God's creation.

To this seat Philip had taken himself on the afternoon of Dominick's arrival, with a sermon of Bourdaloue's, which he had borrowed of Magdalen for French reading. He had not submitted it to Ansel, for, although Bourdaloue was a Romanist, Philip felt that his views would not be accepted by Ansel, though

they would be by Dominick; and, meditating upon what made the difference, as the day was warm he fell asleep. Voices aroused him, he looked about. Ansel and Dominick were in the parlor in full view and hearing. Ansel sat in the window with his back to the garden, Dominick was near him leaning forward and talking earnestly.

"He said he had the bishop's pardon signed by his own hand."

"He took me very much by surprise," said Ansel, —"he would not take our word for the pardon— there was no time to lose and I had to write him one."

"*You* wrote it then, my brother,"—and Dominick shook his head.

"Certainly. What else could I do? The bishop's orders were to bring him along by any means, and he bears me out in it. The easiest way for him would have been for us to knock him on the head and bring him back in his coffin, but that couldn't be done, you see."

"Nothing for many years has hurt my feelings like that first examination," said Dominick. "I prayed to be excused, but the bishop denied me; and even on my knees in his private room I begged him to confirm that pardon to that most unhappy man."

"I don't see what made you care," said Ansel, who

was carelessly smoking a cigar. "He ran his own head into the noose."

"That is true, brother, but although he is a great sinner he is an object for exceeding pity. From my own bitter experience I know what solitary and idle imprisonment is—oh it is a fearful, a killing thing—and how in all these years to come can I pass the cathedral and think of that miserable man, half fed, half clad, shut in deep dungeons out of the light of day, alone, alone?"

"It's his own fault, and he can stand it if you could."

"Ah," said Dominick, innocently, "but he has such a consciousness of a great crime upon him. And then God I believe was better to me than to others. In my lonely dungeon the holy Saviour seemed present as to the children in the furnace of fire; and all the fragments of gospels and epistles that I had read came back to me so fully and with such rich meaning, which was more strange as in the cold and darkness I forgot most of my prayers, yet I was impelled to pray, and I poured out my soul in my own feeble words to God, and felt as if I had entered within the veil and stood before the glory on the mercy-seat."

"It isn't at all to be expected that such a state of rhapsody will come to our friend, the defaulter," sneered Ansel.

"And without it what will be his lot? Hear me, brother—if his experience is that of my first week, what pity must we feel for him—how will he shriek with none to hear, how will the great walls seem stooping to crush him, how will he dash his poor head on the damp stone, and overpowered with the foul air how will he faint and come painfully back to consciousness, alone, hopeless, his head reeling, his blood poisoned, his lungs laboring. And oh, what 'bread of sorrow and water of affliction' as says the 'De Pœnis' is the food brought but once a week. And then to have the slow hours go by, and never know when it is day, nor when it is night, nor how the years are passing. Brother, as by your act this poor man has been brought into our power, I beg you implore the bishop to pardon him at least in part, and to make his fate less terrible."

"It would not do any good," said Ansel, indolently.

"It might, if Brother Arnholm and others would join your petition. Oh, brother, his face was clammy and white, his knees trembled, his hands shook, he wept and cried, he entreated for death or to be handed over to civil law, but not to be condemned to imprisonment for life in the cathedral dungeon. You are to be called to his final hearing before the bishop;—will you not plead for mercy?"

"I prefer justice to mercy," said Ansel, coolly.

"Ah, my brother! if justice rather than mercy were meted out to us, where would we be?" cried Dominick.

"I'd be in the episcopal chair," said Ansel, complacently, "and very likely you'd be in your dungeon still."

Dominick's head drooped lower, but he made no reply. Darker and darker gathered over him the great shadow of his life, until to the eyes of Philip, watching, himself unseen, he seemed shrouded in his gloom from all the common affairs and daily lives of men.

Ansel's cigar was finished. He tossed the little stump from the window, and said brusquely, "Come, there's no use of talking about this any more. You were sent up here to work, and there is a piece of work for you over at Saint Vincent de Paul. There's something wrong there with one of the nuns, Sister Maria Felix."

"Philip's aunt?" asked Dominick.

"The identical individual," said Father Ansel, with cruel sarcasm, for he well knew that Maria Felix had merged her individuality in an Order, and in the treadmill life of that Order had lost her identity, so that she hardly knew herself.

"What is wrong with our sister?" asked Dominick.

"Exactly what I want to know. You show unexpected intellectual acumen, Brother Dominick, in so pertinent a question. The sister is not contented —there is a restlessness, a withholding of something that has caused me to have her removed from her position as local superior—and I have also set Sister Pauline Anna to watch her carefully. If there is anything wrong, that sister will soon discover it. Indeed, she is so anxious to discover something, that her discoveries may lie all in the realm of her own imagination, and we, as we very often do, may take them for fact. However, we do not want the scandal of a pervert here; so you had better seize time by the forelock in a talk with Maria Felix."

"You think her tainted with heresy, then?"

"Very possibly," said Ansel, coolly. "The rule of the house has been far too lax, and a Miss Vaughn has been so diligent in sowing tracts and other deceits, that it is not improbable that our sister has got hold of some of the heretical seed. If she has thus by reading, hearing, or thinking for herself broken her vow, there will be another subject for dungeon discipline."

"God forbid!" said Dominick.

"God forbid!" echoed in the heart of the acolyte

watching in the lilacs. His aunt was in danger, his good, mild, loving aunt, whom first he had feared, whom he had learned to love, and whom in visiting weekly since his coming to Northville he had found feeling for him almost maternal tenderness. Philip had made his visits at Father Ansel's side, carrying his Breviary, and sometimes he had not even spoken to his aunt, at other times a few casual remarks only had passed between them, but even the silence had been eloquent of fond, proud looks, and Philip was not hard-hearted or ungrateful that he should despise the affection of his mother's only sister. How would he feel, he asked himself, if this aunt were carried captive by rude hands and delivered over to such miseries as he had just heard Dominick describe? He felt that he should rebel, and should abhor the despotism that caused her thus to suffer. His blood ran cold when he reflected on the priest so long his companion in the house, who was doomed to such despair; but his blood boiled with the Courcy spirit at the idea of violent hands being laid upon his poor aunt.

The two priests left their conference, and Philip slipped away from his retreat, feeling burdened with dangerous knowledge. The consciousness of the heavy punishment in store for the erring priest was as a nightmare to Philip. Had he known how his

Church would visit the crime, he could never have brought himself to be even the remote means of his arrest. Philip wished that he had never suspected, or had not ventured to speak, and that the transgressor had fled away, his guilt left only in the hands of God. Philip knew that his own motive had been unworthy. Not the detection of error, not the benefit of his Church had been his aim, nor yet the discomfiture of a bad man; but he had sought his own glory and a meed of praise from his superiors, and he bit his lip when he thought how he had been browbeaten and despised. Here was now the ever-present idea of the wailing captive to distress his coming days.

While Philip thought on these things, working meanwhile among his flowers, Dominick had taken his way to the House of Saint Vincent de Paul, and requested Maria Felix to be sent to him in the small sacristy. When first in his presence Maria Felix armed herself against him with all the stubborn silence she had lately cultivated. But as in soft and even tones the old man talked of the sorrows of life, of sympathy wrought out by bitter experience, and of a true balm of Gilead and consolation in religion, the poor repressed and frozen heart thawed, and Maria Felix was willing to speak, and admitted that she was very unhappy.

"And where lies the root of your unhappiness, daughter?"

"I do not know," said the nun.

"Are you dissatisfied and repentant about your vow?"

"Yes, perhaps so, Father. It has not made me good or happy. My life seems so barren and wasted, and hard."

"It is not the act but the spirit that counts, my daughter. If you have not taken your vow with fervent love of Christ, with zeal to his service, it avails you nothing."

"I took it because they told me to," said Maria. "As to love and zeal, I could have loved God more in any other life and served him better. But now that I see this my vow is on me still."

"Yes, daughter, the vow is irrevocable; and since you are given to this life, amid all its discouragements and pains, learn the grace of patience. If all else is taken from you, you can in humility devote the remnant of your days to piety and submission. Does my daughter doubt concerning any of the doctrines of the Church?"

"I don't believe in vocations or religious lives. I never saw a really good, gentle, unselfish nun yet," said Maria Felix, growing angry as her tongue was loosened.

"Hush, daughter — pass that by — what other doubts have you?"

"There's purgatory — it seems so cruel and so hard."

"It is revolting to the natural heart—but recall our ill deserving."

"And my life demands such hypocrisy—the hymns and the prayers and the talk about peace and happiness, when I do not feel any of it."

"You speak of prayers. You pray?"

"I say my prayers, but they do me no good. I don't believe the saints or virgins hear me at all."

"Does my daughter address her prayers directly to Jesus?"

"No, Father, I'm afraid of him."

"Try that plan in your private prayers, my daughter. He who gave himself to die for us a cruel death is surely not hard to be entreated. Cast yourself on his pity—beg him by his wounds, his prayers, his sorrows for you, to open your eyes to duty. My daughter, you believe in the Most Holy Trinity?"

"Yes, Father."

"You believe in an immortal existence of soul and body."

"I do, Father."

"You believe that the heart of man is all vile and sinful."

"I do not doubt it, Father."

"And you believe that by the Spirit's power 'the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.'"

Maria Felix bowed.

"And finally, you believe that Jesus our blessed Saviour 'bore our sins in his own body on the tree,' and that through him we can be justified before God?"

"Yes, Father, I know it to be so."

"You also believe that those rebellious souls not found in Jesus shall taste the wrath and curse of God, and that the saints shall dwell in eternal glory."

"I do."

"*Il suffit*," said the monk under his breath.

"What did you say, Father?"

"I say that these are vital points of doctrine to which you are to take all heed. For the rest, you are to submit to the life in which you find yourself, to practice piety and charity, to avoid ill-will and rebellion, to cease meddling with points too high for you, to be instant in prayer with a fervent heart, and to do all good works diligently."

"But what hope have I when all this life is ended? what hope remains for me in death?"

"Christ who died for you and rose again."

"But purgatory puts me far from him; some office of the Church may be lacking and so I may be lost for ever."

"Do not trouble yourself with such possibilities. Rest in Jesus who is able to save, and willing too, or he had not bowed to the accursed death of the cross."

Maria Felix bent her head, and burst into tears.

"Some light has come to me," she murmured, "some hope. Oh, Father, if you were oftener here to teach me."

"There is a higher Teacher who will abide with your soul for ever—the heavenly Bridegroom will fit you for himself—let Jesus be the beloved of your soul."

The nun knelt, crossing her hands over her bosom, to receive the monk's benediction. He gave it fervently.

As he turned to go, he bethought himself and retraced his steps—"You do not lean to any other Church?"

"No, Father."

"You have read no heretical or forbidden books?"

"Not one."

"That is well. May peace come to you from heaven."

"And how," said Ansel that evening, "did you find the nun?"

"She is a burdened but contrite soul. She holds

no heresy, has transgressed no vow. Hers is a spirit mourning for the face of Christ."

Ansel's lip curled—"What did you inculcate?"

"Obedience, good works, faith, holiness, charity, and earnest prayer."

"A goodly list, 'twill raise her to a saintship. But I know there was something wrong."

"Oh yes, she was darkened and discouraged and felt that she had no vocation, and that her prayers were unheard."

"And you told her, what?"

"I bade her pray to Christ himself, who is merciful and present to help."

"Whew-w," said the Italian, "that is a pretty strong medicine for a weak subject."

"Severe diseases, my brother," said Dominick with entire innocence, "require severe remedies. In my own hours of deepest trial and grief, when all seemed lost, I cried to Jesus as a last resort, and I found grace according to my need."

"You tell rare tales of your experiences," said Ansel, contemptuously.

"I speak but truth. Out of darkness has come an inner light, out of sorrow, comfort, and if I have not joy I have peace. I trust that our sister is now ready to rest quietly in her estate, doing the best she may, living a life of humility and good works.

Pray, my brother, be gentle and let no falsehoods harm her."

"Do you mean to suggest," shouted Ansel with a loud laugh, "that there are such things as falsehoods known in the holy Church!"

"The Church," said Dominick, "is holy in spirit and in doctrine, but she has grown worldly and lax, and needs reform. Oh, my brother, how I have looked and longed for some pure and earnest spirit to rise up among us. My hopes, well-nigh sick with waiting, have fixed for this on our son Philip—perchance he may be a second Saint Ignatius."

In such words as these we see the mind of Dominick. Old habit and early teaching had made him believe Ignatius Loyala—as ignorant and brutal a fanatic, as cruel a bigot as ever cursed the earth *—to be a holy, heaven-inspired Reformer of the Church; and he also claimed that the doctrines of his Church were holy, though he could not deny that much of her present practice was vile: yet, when driven to the wall, he said of the pure, first truths of Protestantism,

* Loyala was ignorant—at thirty-three says his biographer he could do no more than read and write. *Maffœus and Daurignac.* His fanaticism was brutish—"he sought to abase himself to the lowest pitch of human degradation," "crinæm impexum et squalidum," *Maffœus, Ignatius Vita.* Loyala was the master spirit of the *Papal Inquisition*, sustained it by a special memorial and carried it wherever he went. *Ranke*, "*Inquisition*," *Vol.* 1.

untainted and unadulterated with any admixture of Romanism, "*il suffit!*"

At the end of a week, Ansel was summoned to the city to attend the trial of the Northville priest at the episcopal residence; and by what can only be denominated a refinement of cruelty Dominick was also commanded to be present. The summons had a grievous effect upon the old monk. He had nothing to do but to obey, but his whole soul shrank from again beholding the agonies of the prisoner and the bitter severity of the judges.

"It is well," he said to Philip—leaning on his staff and watching the young man setting in order a bed of verbenas—"it is well, son Philip, that we have to look forward to a rest that remaineth, and to a home where enters nothing that shall offend. Here in this weary world even our pleasures become our crown of thorns, and like our Saviour we stagger onward bearing our cross. In all your duties pray for me until I return, son Philip, for my heart is sore, and I have a heavy task before me."

Philip dared not tell how fully he knew what trial was before his old friend—Rome's secret ways and her dungeon discipline were supposed to be unknown to acolytes and sub-deacons.

Fathers Ansel and Dominick departed together, and in their absence a deaf old priest, who doted on roast

beef and apple-dumplings, was brought to Northville, to eat the maid-servant's cookery, to keep in order the nuns and to superintend the acolyte. But, while this carnal-minded priest gorged himself with heavy dinners and took thereafter heavy naps, Philip was left very much to the devices of his own heart, and his heart prompted him to spend a large portion of his time at Mrs. Courcy's.

There in the summer mornings a party of three—Mrs. Courcy, Magdalen and Philip—looked on life's sunny side from an arbor in the garden. It was a goodly arbor, furnished with elaborate rustic seats and tables; from niches on its sides marble nymphs, fauns and cupids peered through the draping vines, and the frail cypress ran riot, climbing high and flinging out on the warm breezes green streamers set with blood-red stars. Here Mrs. Courcy, whose lazy life-bark had ever glided smoothly on a stream of prosperity, wasted the precious hours in endless yards of crocheting, muslin embroidery and tatting; while Magdalen, fair daughter of a Huguenot line, wrought with brush, pen and pencil at her favorite art, and pictures grew beneath her hands. But while Magdalen's hands were busy her tongue was not idle, and now in this good opportunity when the priests were far away she talked much to her young acolyte cousin, who delighted in lying on the soft turf, looking some-

times at the fair overarching sky, but oftener at her fairer face.

"Whose book is the Bible, Philip?" asked Magdalen, drawing her brush across a spot of scarlet on her painter's pallet.

"God's book," replied Philip.

"Have you ever read it?"

"Some of it. The Vulgate was one of our text-books, and we had the Apocrypha—the books you heretics reject—and other parts of the Old Testament."

"What is your Church built on; the Bible, or the traditions of men?"

"On both," said Philip. "The Bible and the Fathers."

"I suppose you've heard of Nebuchadnezzar's image in vision, Philip? The feet were part of iron and part of miry clay, and the clay would not adhere to the iron, and so they were easily broken."

"That doesn't hold good as a simile of our Church," said Philip, "for the traditions do not contradict the Bible—they are united, welded together."

"Oh," said Magdalen, "how is it then that you hold the doctrine of purgatory, teaching that there is an intermediate state where souls expiate by suffering their guilt, when the Bible says that the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin?"

"There, Magdalen, you touch a sore point with me —I am not settled on the doctrine of purgatory—I am not yet satisfied upon it."

"It is your duty to be satisfied, to search for truth and cleave to it. Did not Christ say to the thief on the cross '*To-day* thou shalt be with me in Paradise'? How comes it that the thief got to heaven so much sooner than other people? that Christ's sacrifice was so much fuller for him than for other folk? 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord,' says the Scripture. How blessed is it to be for unlimited periods in purgatory, enduring tortures?"

"As I told you, Magdalen, I am not fully decided on that point—I cannot believe it—it may be that on that one point our Church is mistaken."

"To admit that the Church is mistaken, or may be, even on one point, is to rob her of her infallibility, which is her tower of strength. Besides, Philip, in robbing your Church of the doctrine of purgatory you rob her of her favorite weapon. It is her supposed terrible power over souls that have passed out of this life, that is the foundation of her dominion. No wonder that men yield abject submission to a priest who can for ever doom them by withholding the last offices of their religion, or depriving them of masses."

"You're not more than half a Catholic, Philip,"

said Mrs. Courcy. "You are too much Courcy for abject Romanism."

"Oh yes, I am a Catholic, and a good one," said Philip, "and there are passages of the Scripture which prove purgatory, as, for instance, 'every sacrifice shall be salted with fire,' and 'save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh,' and 'suffering loss,' and the building of 'wood, hay, stubble, being burned,' all those verses mean purgatory, cousin Magdalen."

"Not one of them, Philip, as I can easily prove to you."

"You need not," said Philip, starting up and whisking off the heads of half a dozen foxgloves, that stood close by. "I do not defend the doctrine, I do not believe it, I do not think half our priests believe it, it is a tissue of absurdities, and is used as a power-preserving and money-making engine. Nobody need tell me that my mother is in purgatory, or has ever been there—it is false and cruel!"

"And do you say so to your priest?" asked Mrs. Courcy.

"Not I. I know better than to put myself in danger by telling all I think."

"But according to your prayer-book you put your soul in danger by knowingly withholding anything at confession," said Magdalen.

"Well, now, suppose I had confessed all my soul to our last priest who was a bad man, meditating a bad deed, what good would his absolution have done me? As Father Ansel says, it would have been microscopic!"

"And yet, Philip, according to your Church, at the confessional that same wicked man sat in the place of God, his voice was the voice of God, his ear the ear of God, his absolution the eternal and unimpeachable mind of God."

"Oh, daughter! you make me shudder!" exclaimed Mrs. Courcy.

"The dogmas of Romanism are enough to make any one shudder, mamma. I speak the sense of Philip's Church."

"Wider range of thought might be able to explain and make reasonable a seeming absurdity," said Philip.

"Grant what your Church delivers to us of confession is true,—how comes it that after absolution for every sin, after absolution in God's stead at death, and after the earning of unnumbered plenary indulgences, one still falls into purgatory for further purification?" said Magdalen.

"Oh, there are so many *if's* in the way. We may not have made good confessions, or have truly earned indulgences, or really have been fully absolved, or a

hundred other if's! Nothing is certain," explained the acolyte.

"Thank God," said Magdalen, solemnly, "in Protestantism all is certain. We have a sure word of prophesy, a sure and only Redeemer, a certain promise of the Father to rest upon—we are for ever fixed and safe!"

"Blessed hope!" cried Philip, mentally, "oh that I had been born a Protestant."

Magdalen was wiser than to press her arguments too far at one time. After a lively and successful attack on some part of her cousin's creed, she would withdraw her heavy artillery and bring to bear upon Philip the light weapons of smile and song and repartee.

On another day, Magdalen took up the theory of justification by good works.

"Do good works avail with God for the pardon of our sins, Philip?"

"So, to a degree, the Church teaches."

"Are any of our works perfect and without taint of sin before God?"

"Some, I suppose," said Philip.

"How does that agree with the words of Scripture, 'There is none that doeth good, no not one,'—'All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,'—'By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified,'—man is

'justified by faith without the deeds of the law,'—and 'The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all?'"

"And those passages are all in the Bible?"

"Assuredly."

"I remember some of them," said Philip.

"And how do you answer them, or explain them away?"

"I do not desire to explain away the word of God."

"Then you are more reverent than your Church authorities. Consider, Philip, if the Scriptures are not the word of God but a forgery, your Church has no right to bring her authority from them in any particular, yet how much importance does she attach to such passages as 'Upon this rock I will build my church,' 'Whosesoever sins ye remit,' etc., 'Spirits in prison,' and the like. And if the Scriptures *are* the Word of God, how dare your popes call them 'poisonous' and 'corrupt,' withhold them from the people, and issue dogmas in open contradiction of their plainest teachings?"

When Magdalen was taking such advantage as this of the enemy's absence, it was well for Rome that the trial in the city came to a close and Ansel and Dominick got back to Northville, setting the temporary incumbent free to "return to the land whence he came out," to eat his own beef and drink his own

beer. As in duty bound, Father Ansel privately asked an account of Philip's behavior, and was told that he was a "pious, studious and obedient young man."

During the first hours after the return, Philip could not keep his anxious and compassionate gaze from Dominick's worn, pale face. When the old monk, as was his custom, retired to the church for his evening prayers, Philip at once asked Padre Ansel, "What is the matter with Brother Dominick? he looks as if he were going to die!"

"So are we all some time, though I hope the fatal moment is far off from me," said Ansel, lightly. "I say, Philip, I left you for superintendent of my household, why did you let that old fellow lay into the beer-barrel so heavily? and upon my honor, boy, the butcher's bill is as long as my arm, you should have cut down the rations!"

Philip humbly replied that it was the maid-servant that had done the catering, and he had no idea of being responsible for her. When he had said this he returned to his first topic and asked again "What is the matter with Brother Dominick?"

"Disease of the heart I suppose. He fell out of his chair as if he had been shot yesterday at ten in the morning, and he lay like one dead for an hour or so. He's been feeble enough ever since, but he is

coming round now. The bishop seemed quite concerned about him—more than he is worth," he added in an under tone.

"And what excited his disease at that time?" urged Philip, knowing a great deal more than his priest thought he did, and resolved to come at the root of the matter if possible.

"There was nothing to excite a reasonable person," said Father Ansel. "We were taking a vote, and Brother Dominick was bound not to vote in the affirmative, I could plainly see, and it was such work for him to venture a negative against everybody that he dropped over in a fit and missed his vote entirely, you notice."

Philip looked out of the window and over to the church, thinking of the martyr-soul which was praying and plaining to heaven before its altar. Before his mental vision rose that conclave at the bishop's house, the stern-faced priests, the frantic culprit, the stolid prelate, and gentle Dominick falling lifeless to the floor, torn by a sympathy that could not benefit its object.

To Philip it seemed best in his intercourse with Dominick, to shun all reference to the late business. But not so judged the coarse and cruel nature of the Italian priest. Ansel was continually bringing up the recent painful scenes, but this he dared not do in

Philip's presence. The two priests sat on the front porch, while Philip in various parts of the garden was working among his flowers. The cool, fresh air came with restorative mercy to the shattered nerves of the monk as he leaned back wearily in the easy chair Philip had placed for him, and the evening quiet, the beauty of the landscape and, higher still, the peace of his lately murmured prayers tended to soothe and comfort him. Such soothing was wormwood to Ansel. He took his pipe from between his lips, and casually remarked, "Our man came down rather rough on Brother Arnholm."

Dominick caught his breath—"Let it pass, my brother—let us forget it—let us leave it, for one peaceful hour, with God who ruleth all."

"Come now, I want your opinion," said the imperturbable priest—"did you believe that charge? The bishop hushed it up as irrelevant, but he is great friends with Arnholm—now to me it looked pretty natural, and did you see how he flushed?"

"We may consider that excitement caused the prisoner to speak unadvisedly with his lips—and for ourselves, you remember 'He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law and judgeth the law,'" said the monk sighing.

"One has a right to an opinion, and my opinion is

that Father Arnholm is guilty of the scandal; but he won't suffer for it. As to the prisoner he is a fool to go to charging and attacking one who will be in some sort his jailor. Our friend Arnholm is one who never forgets nor forgives. He will hate that man eternally for what he said, and his hate will bite like a serpent and sting like an adder."

"Forbear, my brother," cried Dominick, lifting a trembling hand as if to ward off a blow.

"Serve him right," persisted Ansel—"what business had he to blab secrets, especially when he got them from the confessional—in that he broke his promise and his honor."

But here help came for Dominick in the shape of Philip, who, seeing from far off that the conversation was becoming painful, approached them with a cluster of flowers and placed them in Dominick's hands.

"See, Brother Dominick," he cried, bringing his honest young face instead of Ansel's before the monk's vision, "here are flowers with a story. Here is the passion flower that tells of the death of our Lord—here are the white lilies of our Lady—here are daisies, the favorites of Saint Margaret, and roses sacred to Saint Elizabeth of Hungary!" and having thus twined with his gift the highest mystery of our faith and the sweetest of the legends of his creed,

Philip sat down on the porch with his priests, an effectual bar to further unpleasant conversation.

What the charge was which was brought against Father Arnholm by the Northville priest in his despair, it not being pertinent to our story, we will not say.

The account he had had of Brother Dominick disturbed Philip's slumbers that night, and tossing restlessly on his bed he heard steps in the hall about midnight. He was ready to open his door to discover who the intruder was, when he reflected that it might be the sound of Ansel's feet, who would consider being confronted an interference that he could not brook. The hall was not dark, the night-lamp was burning low but steadily, and Philip hit upon the expedient of standing up in his bed and inspecting the hall through the ventilator above his door. On putting this design into execution, he saw Dominick and had already opened his lips to speak to him, when Ansel came out of his room and demanded, "What are you doing here, Brother Dominick?"

"I could not sleep; I am oppressed with pain and sorrow, and with your kind permission, brother, I will go to the church and pray."

"You'd better by far go to your bed and sleep. What is the matter?"

"Oh, brother, the prisoner, the poor prisoner!"

"Oh, heaven, what folly!" cried Ansel.

"Brother, brother, you cannot know as I. How few come back from that long despair, to cherish their memories and pity the woes of others. Imprisonment, solitary, idle, voiceless, for life, my brother, consider, for life."

"You're going crazy, Dominick!" cried Ansel.

"From that may God preserve me; will you give me the church-key, my brother?"

"It hangs in the lower hall. Don't disturb me again." Ansel shut his door, and Dominick went down stairs.

Philip, withdrawn out of sight, had listened eagerly to this interview. We suppose it was very mean of him, and we can only palliate his conduct by a reference to his long-continued studies in Jesuitical casuistry, by which every contemptible and wicked thing is made to appear both honorable and lawful. It speaks ill for the spirit of the Romish Church, that such a base and unblushingly corrupt order as the Jesuits in three hundred and thirty years can become its dominant interest, and control the organization of its last great council.*

Philip slept no more that night. His thoughts

*See Prince Hohenlohe's "Questions to the Universities," probably suggested by Dr. Dollinger, Professor of Ch. Hist., in the University of Munich.

were with the worshiper who was uttering the woes of his sorely-wounded heart to a listening, pitying Lord. He heard the monk come slowly up the stairs again, when the east was flouting bloody banners to scatter the setting stars.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DEPTHS OF ROME.

ROME leads her victims warily. Before the postulants in the convents are reaches of ambition, golden horizons of hope, and little pleasures and fantasies of the present, to beguile them to the novitiate. Like Proserpine in Elysian fields, the luckless maidens wander on, gathering flowers and seeing others lying still beyond, lured by the golden bloom that nods beside the fateful stream.

These postulants are addressed with gentle words. They are allowed to cluster together in idle talk and in study that is akin to idleness, while among them sits the nun, their guardian, calling this one "Dear child," and that "Beloved sister," and the other "My daughter," but not daring, if she would, to speak out honestly and say "Dear child, your feet take hold on slippery places, and the end thereof is death—beloved sister, of all follies and crimes that ever were committed yours is the greatest and most incredible save mine—my daughter, you have come to dwell in a charnel-house, a place of wickedness and dead men's bones—fly while there is time." No; the guardian

nun dares say none of these truths. She buries her black secrets and her burning shames in her own heart, and sits among the prattling postulants, pricking her needle in and out on gorgeous altar-cloth or gaudy vestment for the Virgin, and, if she speaks, it is only to utter some inculcated lie, like a siren luring these gay young barks to perish on her own wretched isle.

Thus Viola Hastings, now a postulant at the convent of Seven Sorrows, was continually called "Dear sister," and "Dear child;" her taste was praised, her devotion was commended, and, more flattering than all, Mother Vallé, having read some scraps of rhyme which she had written about the "Incense," the "Vesper Hour," "Our Lady of Sorrows," "The Star of Our Hope," and so on, pronounced her a poetic child, and prophesied that the Church should yet hear of her talent, and that her hymns should be some day published for the children of the Church to sing. Viola was indeed elate, thought she had found her true vocation, and was joyous in the prospect of being a nun.

But did Mother Vallé believe all she said about Viola's poetry? Oh no; but she saw that pride was a ruling trait in the girl, and she would feed that pride until her victim was securely in her grasp.

It is true, that across the present brightness of

Viola's sky came yearnings for her despised and forsaken home, came pity for the grief she had caused her father to feel, came keen remorse for her own duplicity; but these better instincts she banished, she confessed them to Padre Arnholm and did penance for them, going up all the staircases in the convent on her knees and praying at each of the many little shrines stationed along them. To compensate her for the sacrifice of honesty, father, friends, social pleasures and family ties, Viola had books of legends, was taught to dabble in water-colors, to make wax-flowers and wax angels, and was allowed to be mistress of the Virgin's wardrobe and to dress daily that elegant doll-baby, assisted by the other postulants. To her father Viola wrote several times, her letters ever in the same style as the first, for as yet she had no real regrets and repentings. From Mr. Hastings, poor man, she received a note or two, and at last a lengthy letter, entering into arguments, upbraidings and entreaties. This of course came to Mother Vallé's hands, and a day or two after Viola was summoned to her presence.

"I have given you several letters from your father, Viola, I have here another."

"Oh, thank you," cried Viola.

"This letter it is not my intention to deliver to you."

"What!" cried Viola, "not let me see it at all."

"Do not interrupt me," said the abbess, severely, while the postulant's countenance assumed the black and angry expression wherewith she had been wont to intimidate her stepmother.

"I have considered," went on the steady-voiced abbess, "that here is an admirable opportunity to test your ready obedience to my will, as your mother and superior." Here Viola's face brightened a little, she saw an opportunity of earning praise. "By such tests as these we decide the temper and piety of our children. The true Bride of Christ must be all humility and docility."

"Certainly, mother," said Viola, summoning all her resolution, "you will not find me remiss in duty. I obey all your commands."

"Truly," said the abbess, haughtily, "in *this* house my commands *must* be obeyed."

"I always wish to be your dutiful child," said Viola, beginning to cry.

"Yes, yes, I see; I am not blaming you," said the abbess impatiently, lighting a wax candle as she spoke. "Here is the letter; confirm your obedience, daughter Viola, by burning it unread in my presence."

Viola's lips trembled, and an uncontrollable sob broke forth;—she advanced slowly and took the let-

ter with a faltering hand, the abbess eyeing her in cold scorn;—the poor girl conquered her emotion, held the longed-for letter in the flame and laid at last its black ashes on a little tray.

"Now," said Mother Vallé, sharply following up her advantage, "sit down by my table and write a note to your father, telling him that you received the letter which he thought it his duty to write, but which you thought it your duty not to read, and which, lest its heresies should shadow your Catholic peace, you have burned unread."

With what a sharp struggle Viola obeyed this cruel order! How hardly could her faltering hand trace the wicked words! What though she sent her father her love and duty, was it not, considered with her avowed action, a miserable mockery?

The letter written and put in Mother Vallé's hands, Viola was permitted to retire. She was sick at heart, her brain throbbed, her cheeks burned, and she obtained permission to pass the remainder of the day in the dormitory on her narrow bed. Was she paid for all this sacrifice of duty and self-respect by having a nun come into that dormitory at night, as all the postulants were getting ready for bed, and say to her, "Dear Sister Viola, the Mother Superior sends you her blessing and her approval?"

Not long after this trial it was announced to Viola

that she might, with several others, take the white veil and enter on her novitiate. The abbess told her that she might write and request her parents and friends to be present at the ceremony, which is always an imposing one and celebrated by unusual cheerfulness, freedom and feasting in a convent.

To see his daughter take this veil, Mr. Hastings never would consent—to see her, and be allowed only to address her on unimportant subjects in the presence of foes and strangers, this he could not endure. He had grown to talk freely of his trouble to Magdalen, and to share with her Viola's letters. He gave her the one announcing the coming ceremony.

"I cannot go," he said.

"Mr. Hastings," said Magdalen, "I will go. I will write and request Mother Vallé to receive me at the convent as her guest. I will stay there a number of days, and will strive to get private speech with Viola and to learn how she really feels."

"Will it be safe?" asked Mr. Hastings.

"I am not afraid," said the intrepid daughter of the Huguenots. "Let Mother Vallé touch me if she dare. If Magdalen Courcy does not go and come again at her own will, we have money enough and friends enough to make the doors of the 'Seven Sorrows' shake!"

Magdalen told Philip where she was going.

"Very good," said the acolyte, "they will make a Catholic of you."

"Not so," said Magdalen. "But give me time, Philip, and I will make a Protestant of you."

Ascertaining Magdalen's intention, Judith Vaughn also wrote, requesting to be received as a visitor to attend the grand ceremony. In due time answers came. To Magdalen Mother Vallé wrote graciously, saying it would give her much pleasure to receive her dear young friend; but a stately note informed Miss Vaughn that the "Seven Sorrows" must decline to receive her, as they had no room for further guests.

"What a downfall to my pride!" cried Magdalen. "So feeble a foe as I am may be entertained without fear. But you, Judith, are an enemy to be dreaded and kept at a distance!"

Magdalen took advantage of Mother Vallé's permission, and reached the convent of Seven Sorrows some days before Viola was to be professed. Mother Vallé received her young guest with much kindness, gave her a small room within her own, and entertained her most of the time in her own parlor. On the evening of her arrival Magdalen said, "You know Viola Hastings was a very dear friend of mine, Mother Vallé—I should like to see her—may I not to-night?"

"That would be impossible, my dear child," said

the superior. "Unacquainted with our rules, you do not know that Viola is now making a retreat of ten days, in company with the other postulants."

"And what is a '*retreat*,' Mother Vallé?" asked Magdalen.

"It is a period of silence, fasting, meditation and prayer, in which our postulants, by devotion, examination and study, prepare themselves for the holier and higher life of the novice. They begin and end their retreat by confession."

"And when will it be ended?" persisted Magdalen.

"They have begun by confessing to Father Arnholm"—Magdalen shivered, she felt sure she could never pour out *her* heart to the crafty German—"they will end on the evening before their profession, by confessing to our bishop, a bishop alone being allowed to receive the last general confession of the postulant."

"What then! Can I not see my friend at all!" cried Magdalen.

"You can see her on the day of her profession. Now it is incumbent upon her to give herself entirely to the practice of piety, undisturbed by the friendships she is to forswear for ever."

"And can Viola have no friendship, no sisterly, no filial ties, after she enters her novitiate?"

"My dear child, the novice has no private feelings, no particular regards. The novitiate is the period of

betrothal to Christ. When that is ended, the novice, by assuming the nun's vows and veil, becomes his bride. The betrothed and the bride of Christ can have no lower loves."

"And how long must this novitiate continue?" inquired Magdalen.

"By our rules two years."

"And during that two years suppose that any change their minds?"

"None ever do," said the abbess, lying as blandly as she did everything else—"Our dear children prove their sincerity and their vocation in their estate as postulants, and none ever draw back. If they did, you know the Scripture, 'If any draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in them,' which refers primarily to women in Orders, and signifies that by drawing back they destroy themselves for ever—a fate happily saved to all good Catholics."

Viola, as Mother Vallé intimated, had entered on her last state of trial as a postulant, shut up in a gloomy half-lighted cell, furnished only with a hard bed and a crucifix, eating but one coarse meal a day, praying in the chapel regularly once every two hours through the whole twenty-four, and not allowed to open her lips to any one but Mother Vallé or the two nuns who guarded the postulants. She was now testing some of the vaunted sweetness of convent life.

For reading she was allowed "The Nun Sanctified," "The Lives of Saint Catherine and Saint Bridget," "The Child of Mary," and "The Prayer-book." These were given to her in rotation, each was made a study, and each night she spent an hour on her knees on the bare floor before her two guardian nuns being questioned on these valuable works. Under this régime Viola grew weak and pale and lost the ruddy roundness of cheek and figure that had once, alas, been her annoyance. The girl was of a vigorous constitution and had been blessed with bounding health; but with the insane folly of many modern girls had pined to be "delicate," "fragile," of "interesting paleness," etc., a style of nonsense much cultivated not only in dime novels but in some polite literature of a higher rank. And now of this coveted paleness and fragility Viola was likely, under convent discipline, to have more than her desire.

Plainly informed by Mother Vallé that she was not to be permitted an interview with Viola, Magdalen strove to seize one in the face of prohibition; she soon gathered that at stated intervals the postulants were conducted to the chapel to pray, and, though studiously excluded from the place of worship at those hours, after many attempts Magdalen succeeded in meeting the forlorn procession in the hall. At the head of the dismal line of march came a nun

with book and crucifix; next walked the postulants with wan, sad faces, and eyes cast downward; the rear was ably guarded by a sister whose vixenish expression no white folds, no black veil could ameliorate. The leading nun beheld Magdalen approaching, and with her crucifix motioned her to turn and retreat. Magdalen put on an expression of the most amiable wonderment and still advanced. The nun motioned yet more vigorously, and Magdalen, as if offended, threw back her stately head and came straight on. She passed the distressed and gesticulating nun, and there was Viola. Oh, what a shocking contrast was there between these two friends who had shared together the sports of infancy and the dreams of youth!

Magdalen had studied well her part, she wished to let Viola see the meanness and bareness of her chosen life that she might feel and confess aversion to it. She held out her hand and caught Viola's reluctant fingers.

"Viola, dear Viola! speak to me," she cried.

Viola dared not speak; but she raised her sad eyes, and Magdalen, more beautiful than ever, stood before her in a dress of pearl gray silk, with coral pin, bracelets, buttons and watchchain, a fall of delicate lace revealing her white round throat, the burnished waves of her brown hair brushed from her face, and

her eyes all shining with the light of life. And what was Viola!—her hair cut short, her face white and old already, a close white cap on her head, a coarse and scanty black gown falling in straight folds to her feet. Her eyes filled with tears as she felt the contrast, and then they sunk abashed.

Oh, who has made this difference in these two young girls? Rome, Rome! most wicked harlot, feeding on wasted lives and broken hearts, it is thou! it is thou! it is thou!

Magdalen caught Viola in her arms and kissed her. It was but a moment's meeting; for the two nuns rushed up, crying, "Miss Courcy, this will never do, you transgress our rule!" and, not daring to touch her, they roughly seized Viola, and hurried her away.

"I am surprised that my young friend should strive to violate our rule," said Mother Vallé to Magdalen.

"May I not speak to my friend when I meet her?" asked that artful damsel.

"The meeting, my child, was designed and self-willed," replied the inflexible abbess.

There were no more meetings between these two friends, and the one that Magdalen so carefully contrived produced no result save to make Viola mortified and angry at her own guise, and to cause her to

seek consolation for herself in the fine bridal display of her profession morning.

On the afternoon previous to the White Veil ceremony, Mother Vallé met her postulants in a room apart from the rest, where she gave the kneeling group their final instructions and exhortations.

"You have all," she said, "knocked at the door of our Order for admission. You have, during the past term of your residence here, dwelt at the feet of the gracious Mother of God, entreating her favor to you that you may be found worthy of betrothal to her beloved Son, who has committed all power of choice into her hands. The white garments are ready—you have approved yourselves in all things—'Behold the Bridegroom cometh,' go ye forth to meet him. But beware, now that all this has been done—when you wear the white veil of your consecration, beware, lest pride or avarice or self-will appear in you, and he drive you forth from this his house to wander abroad with a curse, and to come into no higher state of holiness. I will not conceal from you, that your novitiate will be a time of trial, of submission, of self-denial, of severe tasks, of difficult lessons, in every way to try you, to prove if you are worthy. Be firm, be obedient, be faithful, and the gates of glory will open to you. Then, in that state of sanctification, in the immaculate perfection of the holy nun, a sacred

vessel that nothing may defile,* you will advance far above other women, you will rise to saintship and angelhood on earth, and before you may lie the blissful lives of Saint Catherine of Sienna, and of Saint Bridget. Upon you has smiled the Holy Virgin, who by her very presence doth create virgins;† who has founded you in Christ, as from the beginning she did found the world with God."‡

Pray *did* Mother Vallé think herself holy and happy, without spot or taint, a soul dwelling in intimate communion with God?

After this precious exhortation the postulants were conducted to the chapel, where they knelt before the grand altar. Then, one by one they entered the confessional and kneeling confessed to the bishop; and, as each concluded the required form, she put her hand through the little lattice, and the bishop clasping it on the other side received her vow. Of such a scene Thackeray says, "There she kneels and commits suicide upon her heart! Oh, honest Martin Luther! thank God that you came to pull that infernal, wicked, unnatural altar down."§

After confession the postulants returned to the

* See "Nun Sanctified," by Saint Alphonsus Liguori, and "Pontificale Romanum," pars prima.

† Saint Ambrose.

‡ Saint Cornelius Lapide.

§ Irish Sketch-book.

altar, where, kneeling before the "Sacrament," they continued in a form of prayer until the first *nocturn* (or midnight), when they were allowed to retire to their dormitory to find in sleep strength for the duties of the coming day. Oh pitiful, oh hapless nuns, daughters of affliction! God send you sleep, send you the sleep of forgetfulness of all your sorrow and your loss, or send you the brief brightness of other days in dream.

Early the next morning Mother Vallé met her postulants again for a final warning. "I charge you," she said, "my daughters, that as you may make this house of your abode a heaven or a hell, you make it heaven. If your soul draw back, if you rebel, if you meditate escape or a broken vow, then you will indeed drink in this life the bitterness of death, you will be shut up whence it is *impossible to escape*, you will find your convent a place of chastisement, a scene of continual torture where you will have never a moment's peace.* You will have a hell here and a hell hereafter. But if you are cheerful and submissive, if you are dutiful and devout, your Paradise begins on earth and you breathe the odors of heaven."†

This discourse did not harmonize well with what our dear Mother Vallé had said to Magdalen. After

*Saint Liguori, "Nun Sanctified." Dublin edition of 1844.

†Ibid.

her oration of threats and promises, Mother Vallé kissed, embraced and blessed her postulants, and consigned them to nuns who were to exhaust all their taste in dressing them for the sacrifice in the chapel. Viola knew that her father had been invited to be present, but had not been told that he refused to come. She had been surprised and startled to find Magdalen at the convent, but discerned from her dress and the casual remarks of the sisters that it was only as a visitor and with no religious designs. The abbess, however, being accustomed to weak-minded women and girls, hoped much from the effect upon Magdalen of the imposing ceremonies.

The chapel had been decorated with much splendor, and many guests had arrived. The bishop and priests stood before the altar and the candidates for the novitiate, led by several nuns, entered the chapel and paced its aisles in bridal array. From many foolish lips came whispers, "how lovely!"—"how devout!"—"how innocent!"—"how striking!"—"how impressive!"—and many more "hows," equally absurd and ridiculous. But Magdalen, looking at Viola, could only say, "Oh moving corpse! changed already to the similitude of death, to what corruption and decay and wretchedness art thou sure to come!"

Viola looked once about the chapel hoping to see her father, and a deep disappointment settled on her

face as she noted his absence. She caught Magdalen's eye and bravely tried to smile; but already great doubt and dread had filled her heart, and her smile was feeble as the last glimmering light of a stormy day. Two young girls, pupils, clad in white as bridesmaids, attended Viola, one on either side, to raise her veil when she reached the steps of the sanctuary. The bishop held in his hand the new dress which as a novice she was to wear. He cut a lock from her hair, then blessed her, gave her the garment, gave her a rosary and a crucifix, asked for her final renunciation of the world and all with which a beneficent God had dowered her in her womanly inheritance, and now Viola had mounted a higher step and was a postulant no longer, but a *novice* in the convent of Seven Sorrows, with a new name, Mary Segneri.*

To her home went Magdalen, three days after, her mission unaccomplished.

October was passing away, the chill winter drew near, and colder than winter was the heart of Maria Felix. The poor nun was suspected by her priest, maliciously watched by Sister Pauline Anna, and contemned by her fellow-nuns. She tried hard to live as Dominick had directed, to cherish humility, good works and entire obedience, to cultivate the grace of

* Segneri, *i. e.*, Servant, instructed in the method of pleasing the Virgin.

patience and to endure unto the end. But how difficult to bear great trials and carry heavy burdens with patient fortitude, when the arid desert of our daily life is refreshed by no heaven-descended showers, and when from out its weary waste rises no living spring of pure devotion.

Dominick had bidden her pray to Christ, but Maria Felix had been too long taught to regard Jesus with dread. The blasphemous language of her deceived Romish heart was "Lord, I know thee, that thou art a hard man!" She had been taught that out of Mary, apart from her intercession, Christ is a consuming fire. Happily she had now lost her trust in the Virgin, but unhappily she had found no faith in Jesus. Poor distressed soul, she could only stand uttering her plaint without realizing where she could go for relief.

A nun receives few favors, and little help or compassion from her superiors. Since Maria Felix was not, and could not be happy, she was forced to become as miserable as possible. She was therefore sent by Father Ansel back to the House of Charity and delivered over to the tender mercies of Mother Denny. Said David "I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the Lord; for very great are his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man." If one might be permitted to add anything

to the words of David, Sister Maria Felix might have said, "and above all things let me not fall into the hand of Mother Denny, whose tender mercies are cruel, and whose tongue is a sharp sword."

Sister Maria Felix had once been housekeeper at the House of Charity, but now she was degraded from that respectable position. Mother Denny appropriated to her use garments coarser than those worn by the other nuns, and gave her the most menial offices to perform, such as the blacking of stoves, the cleaning of door-knobs, the polishing of windows, the scouring of steps, and the washing of candlesticks. Was there a sick patient to sit up with, Maria Felix was the one to be deprived of sleep (and perhaps this was lucky for the patients, for Maria Felix did not, like the other nuns, vent her sleepiness and vexation on her helpless charge). She was also rudely catechized by Mother Denny before the other sisters, concerning her studies, her prayers and her religious observances. She was galled by being watched and tutored like the smallest pupil. Sometimes, for no reason at all, this suffering nun was deprived of her meals, was ordered to eat alone in a corner, or was given poorer food than the rest. And from all these petty tyrannies there was no appeal. Mother Denny's was an unlimited despotism. Rome had virtually said to her "Behold she is in thy hand, only save her life;" and even if

this reservation of life had been disregarded, very likely no great tumult would have been made about it.

No longer permitted to go beyond the gate, Maria Felix found what had once been an abode of comparative freedom now the most secure of prisons. Her every footstep was dogged, and even when she knelt weeping at her prayers she knew some cruel eye was fixed upon her. Other nuns, condemned to a penance of prayer, took an hour-glass, retired to the chapel-gallery, spread out their book, looked here and there as they rattled over their portion, and no sooner had the allotted sand filtered away than they sprang to their feet and rushed off with book and timekeeper.* But Maria Felix, sobbing out her woes, asking only for time to pray, was called from her knees to her tasks, or was watched and jeered even while she bowed before the altar.

In these hours of darkness she found but few of the ordained prayers of her Church which seemed anything but mockery or idle form; but the darkness was driving her to a closer search for light; and, groping for help and for an appropriate expression of her woe, the Seven Penitential Psalms came to her with a new meaning. From those glorious petitions, from those earnest heart-cries, the apostate Church

*Of such a charming spectacle I have been witness in Montreal.

has taken nothing away. These echoes of David's penitence and of his soul yearnings roll unchanged through cathedral arches, and meet in the prayer-books the seeking eye. Merciful God, that leaves himself not without a witness in the worst of places.

Some five months passed away. In Northville there was no change. Philip still attended to his duties and his studies, visited his Courcy cousins, generally accompanied by his priest, and found very little time for private disputations with Magdalen. He had not told Mrs. Courcy that his aunt had gone from Northville under the displeasure of her priest, it would have been a violation of church etiquette, of which our acolyte could not be guilty; and in truth, if Philip had designed to reveal the real state of affairs, Mrs. Courcy would not have been his chosen confidante; for that good-natured, hasty and inconsiderate woman would doubtless have drawn indignation on both Maria Felix and Philip, by a tirade to Father Ansel concerning restraining or condemning a member of the Courcy lineage. Becoming more and more anxious about his aunt, and thinking of dungeons and coercion, Philip watched for an opportunity to go to the city, when he hoped he might be allowed to call on his relative. He thought also of Brother Dominick's bad health, and desired to see him. At last an auspicious day arrived, when

Ansel was going to the city, and Philip begged to be allowed to accompany him. Most young men of Philip's age are at liberty to go about as they please, and possess funds of their own; if any young American desires to be in a state of complete tutelage and subjection, let him go to a Romish school and study for the priesthood.

Philip went to the city with Padre Ansel. As he stepped into the cars, Mrs. Courcy's footboy put in his hand a sealed envelope. The good lady had sent him fifty dollars to spend in the city, supposing that he would buy a watchchain, as she had given him a watch on his last birth-day. Father Ansel coolly took possession of the money, and remarked that it would buy some new ornaments for the church—which, as we have mentioned, the priest was resolved to make as attractive as possible. The sequestration of this property made him as pleasant as he knew how to be; and after visiting the college he allowed Philip to go alone to Father Arnholm's to ask for a permit to visit his aunt at the House of Charity. Philip thought he would like to visit the schoolroom so long misruled by Pauline Anna, and the fact that his aunt was in her old abode greatly relieved his mind. Kitty put her rosy visage out of Father Arnholm's door in answer to Philip's ring, and said that his reverence was not at home. Philip thought he

might find the priest at the church, and betook himself to that sacred place, and applied himself to the door at which Padre Arnholm generally entered on private occasions. It swung open, and then he perceived that there had been a futile attempt to lock it from within, the key having been turned when the door was not fairly latched, and so the bolt having missed its hold. The door swung silently to on well-oiled hinges, and with light and reverent step Philip passed down the aisle toward the side-doors opening upon the chancel, where processions and recessions take place at the Sacrament. One door was ajar, and Philip caught sight of Father Arnholm's back as he went down a stairway, carrying in one hand a brown jug, and in the other a large brown loaf. Philip did not speak. He thought it was always his fate to see and hear things not intended for his knowledge, and all his interest was aroused as he reflected that Father Arnholm was directing his steps to those dim regions of horrible romance, the cathedral dungeons. Philip had often gone down this stairway on errands, and found nothing but a range of bare dusty rooms some seven feet high, where were kept brooms, fuel, benches and wornout books and garments. He knew now that there must be more than this, or Father Arnholm would never have gone down there with water and with bread. Fascinated by the nearness of forbidden

knowledge, he approached the staircase and looked down. Stooping to have a wider glimpse below, he saw a portion of the flooring raised as by a spring, and steps leading down into the lower gloom. A lamp was suspended from a hook to guide the descent of the stairs, and Philip could further see that in these subterranean regions a semi-twilight reigned, a little light being let down from above, in some mysterious way. The acolyte held his breath and gazed, and gazed.

He would stay but a moment, he would hasten away and leave the church-door as he found it—he would go, but oh, one moment he would stay, and suddenly on that moment's stillness broke a wild and thrilling cry, a shriek of mortal agony. Philip held his breath. Closely following the shriek were short yelps and growls, as from an enraged wild beast; there was a sound of struggling, smothered groans, and then Father Arnholm's voice came up the stairs, like a dismal wail from the pit, "O God, oh help! Help me, heaven!"

Philip heard. Dared he rush to answer that pitiful, that fearful cry? He hesitated, there was a shrill fierce laugh, and again that cry struggling up, "Help me, O my God!"

Philip bounded down the first flight of stairs. The church-furnace was near, and by it lay the heavy iron

poker. He seized the offered weapon, put his feet upon the lower steps of stone, caught the lamp from its hook, and followed the cries, plainer now, along a corridor. Through the gloom, echoing among the walls of damp stone, came the sounds of a contest, and now Philip saw Father Arnholm struggling fiercely with a terrible object. The priest's opponent was a madman; his hair and beard of a neglected growth, the upper half of his emaciated body naked, one long wiry arm wound about Arnholm's neck, the other clasping his waist, compressing, twisting, using teeth as well as hands, and biting and tearing at the priest's head and clothing; while like a wild beast he growled and yelled, and over Arnholm's shoulder his red blazing eyes met Philip's glance.

One look showed that Arnholm was in imminent danger. He could not cope with the maniac's strength and his already gained advantage. Philip rushed up and struck the assailant a blow. The man dropped at once as dead, and Father Arnholm staggered back against the wall, crying, "Philip!"

"Are you seriously hurt, Father?" asked the acolyte. The Father groaned, and wiped his bloody face and neck on his torn robe. Philip held his lamp over the prostrate figure on the floor, and lo, it was the unhappy Northville priest!

"Is he dead?" asked Arnholm.

"Yes," cried Philip, passing trembling hands along the body. "Oh no, oh no, he is alive!"

Arnholm took the lamp and pointed to an open door. "There is his place; put him in there, and pour some water over him. I came to bring him food, and this is what I make by it!"

Philip pulled the limp figure, late so strong and tense in passion, to the indicated place, and laid it on a bed of straw. He then bathed the face assiduously, and pushed back the matted hair—"Don't be so long," said Arnholm in a faint voice, "I need help."

Philip took off his own waterproof cloak, and wrapped it about the half-clad body. Signs of returning animation cheered him.

"Put the bread and jug near his hand," said Arnholm, "and let us get away before he comes to; he is stark mad and will kill us both."

Philip left the cell; Arnholm feebly bade him lock the door, and leaning heavily on his arm was conducted to his own house, Philip under the priest's orders first rehanging the lamp and making all fast. Getting secretly to his own room, the reverend Father had Philip bathe his wounds, aid him in changing his clothes and place him comfortably in a reclining-chair. "Bring me some wine, Philip," he said, and Philip brought him a glass. He drank it, and motioning the acolyte to a seat closed his eyes for a

while until strength and composure came back; then he looked firmly at Philip.

"How came you there?"

"I went to look for you in the church—here is Father Ansel's permit. The door was open and I went in and heard you cry for help. Of course I came to aid you."

"You have saved my life," said Arnholm, slowly. "I am strong to hate; I hate to death, but I can remember faithfulness. You have been faithful to me always, Philip, and now you have saved me from a frightful death. But, Philip, in so doing you have learned what no acolyte is allowed to know, what many priests and the masses of the people are ignorant of. Philip, if ever you open your lips of that knowledge, your life will not be worth a straw. No distance will keep you from the Church's avenging arm. If you ascend up into heaven, it will find you there; if you make your bed in hell, behold it will reach you there; if you take the wings of the morning and fly away to the uttermost parts of the earth, behold the arm of the Church will seize and destroy you. Philip, reach me yon silver box."

Philip handed the box, and the priest opening it exhibited a fragment of unleavened bread stamped with a cross. "Here is a consecrated host," said Arnholm; "kneel, Philip!"

But Philip was already on his knees. "Cross now your fingers, and touch this box, and swear to bury what you have seen for ever in your heart and by word or sign or look never to reveal it."

Philip obeyed and repeated the oath.

"Break it and you die," said Father Arnholm. "Put back the box, Philip, and forget what you have seen. Remember in your oath lies your safety. Keep it and I shall never forget that you saved my life." Thus our acolyte had gone down into the depths of *Rome.**

* Ecclesiastical judges have power to commit accused persons to prison; yea to condemn them to *perpetual* imprisonment. In atrocious offences, when the avoiding of justice *by flight* is to be apprehended, the bishop may proceed to summary reformation and necessary detention. *Corpus Juris Canonici, vol. III. p.* 561, *et seq.* "The ecclesiastical judge can condemn his subjects to the bread of sorrow and the water of affliction, in perpetual imprisonment." *De Pœnis, Cap. Quamvis, lib. V. tit.* 9. "Perpetual imprisonment is for the end that the accused persons might be removed from all occasions of crime and public scandal." *Ibid, head VIII.*

Here is authority in "the diabolical section which should fill every priest with dismay." A man named Foley averred that he had been imprisoned in the dungeons of the Baltimore cathedral, and proof was furnished which has never been contravened. In Italy Padre Titus was confined thus in a dungeon for *disobedience*, and when nearly dead was rescued during the Italian Revolution. He was surrounded by corpses. The dungeon was under a church on the outskirts of the city of Rome.

CHAPTER XIV.

COMING OUT OF BABYLON.

SEVERAL days passed before Philip requested a permit to see his aunt. He felt a delicacy about asking a favor where he had conferred one; still he was unwilling to lose his opportunity, and at last found himself at the gate of the House of Charity, with the needful document in his hand. Maria Felix came to her nephew in the sacristy. She was accompanied by a nun who said "The Mother Superior limits the interview to fifteen minutes." This nun remained with them, and of course hindered any free conversation. Philip was shocked at the great change which had passed over his aunt, and at the misery of her whole appearance. He saw also that she was striving by no overt act to increase the wrath of her superiors, but by a pitiful quietness and humility to appease the higher powers. In the course of conversation Philip mentioned Brother Dominick, and caught a sudden lighting up of his aunt's face.

"He is very good," she said.

"Would you like to see him?" asked Philip.

"I have no requests to make," said the subdued nun.

"I will ask Father Arnholm to send him."

Maria Felix made no answer, but Philip thought her dim eyes brightened with a quickly checked satisfaction.

"I am afraid you are sick," said Philip, anxiously.

"I am not sick," replied the nun.

"Then are you unhappy?"

"In this world we should not look for happiness."

"Well," said Philip, desperately, "is there any favor I can do you, or ask for you?"

"I have already more than I deserve," said Maria.

Surely one would not think there was any harm in such an unsatisfactory visit as this, but Maria Felix was condemned to do penance, because she had not said she was "perfectly well and perfectly happy."

While such is the life of the nun, how fares our novice, Viola? The first restriction of her new life was that she could neither write nor receive a letter but once a year. As her chief taste was for writing rhymes and doing fancy work, all writing materials and implements of her favorite employments were taken from her. She was fond of social intercourse, therefore she was strictly prohibited speaking to any one but a nun, and that only for subject of absolute necessity. At home Viola had been undeniably lazy,

and had rebelled at housework of the lightest description; the Mother Abbess knew this, and assigned to her such tasks as washing, scrubbing, scouring. To dress the little half sisters, or to put them to bed, Viola had esteemed an office beneath her; now there were at Seven Sorrows some dozen little orphans in training, and Viola's distaste for juveniles being known, she must bathe, comb and dress them, and attend to their meals.

The labors now falling to her share were too heavy by far for her health and strength, and as she pursued them aching and weeping, too often she had penances to do for dust left in the corners, brasses soiled by her tears, and stones not scrubbed to sufficient whiteness. Over-worked and unhappy, the girl would have sickened and died had she not been sustained by hope. Two years of these trials, she told herself, and *then*, ah *then*, she would have the upper hand. She would write, would teach, would go abroad in her black robes on errands of mercy to poor souls who would regard her as their saint and guardian angel; she would be watched by no novice mistress, she would have a cell of her own, and by extra zeal would rise to the heights where dwell Saint Veronica and Saint Rose of Lima. Such hopes as these still buoyed her up, and when memory reverted to the pleasant village of her nativity where she had been

free to come and go, to the comfortable home where, despite her restless complainings, she had had many privileges and much kind attention, to the friends who had loved and cherished her, and to the good future which had spread out before her, when memory recalled all this and bade her regret what she had done in casting all away, then pride came to her aid, she would endure anything rather than admit that she had erred, she would bear her wrongs in silence that none might triumph or cry "I told you so," she would never allow that others had been wiser than herself, she would say she was right and happy to the bitter end.

Parents! to such false conclusions, to such obstinacy and misery comes ungoverned childhood!

By the end of Viola's first year of novitiate Mr. Hastings had expressed so much honest indignation at not being allowed to see his child or hear from her, and had gained so great sympathy in Northville, and his case had called forth so many strictures on Romanism, that Father Ansel judged it expedient to take some action in the matter, and he accordingly suggested to Father Arnholm that it would be well to order Mother Vallé to permit Viola to write to her father that on a certain day she would see him at Seven Sorrows. Thus, by a chain of circumstances which it is unnecessary for us to recount, Mr. Hast-

ings was permitted to exercise his inalienable privilege of speaking to his own child.

But, for an event which was to silence hostile tongues, and force Mr. Hastings to witness against himself and retract what he had spoken, preparation was necessary.

Mother Vallé summoned her tired, thin, sickly-looking, heavy-hearted novice to her presence, and took her hand, saying, "My dear daughter, Mary Segneri, I find you worthy of your chosen name, you are in all things well approved and instructed. The estate of trial and instruction usually lasts the whole two years of the novitiate; but you, my dear child, please your superiors so well that better things are already in store for you. I have ordered that your materials for work and writing be given you, that you be released from all menial tasks, that you remain constantly with the consecrated sisters, that you spend two hours each day at work in the flower-garden, and as a yet greater mark of my esteem and affection, I permit you to write to your father, and say he may visit you in this house, two weeks from to-day."

Viola's heart bounded with joy, she kissed Mother Vallé's hand, and thanked her again and again.

To Viola were now given nine hours' sleep and three good meals a day. We know the recuperative power of youth—she regained her lost strength; the

work in the garden brought back the roses to her cheeks; she returned with eagerness to her well-loved employments, and said to herself, that now her hopes were confirmed, that a nun's life *was* easy and pleasant, and to that ease and pleasure, she, an especial favorite, had attained before her time.

The sisters prepared for their novice a dress of extra fineness of quality, and the white bonnet, veil and kerchief were brought to the extreme of whiteness, that Viola might make a good appearance when her father came.

Mother Vallé invited her to spend some time each evening in her parlor, and these hours the abbess occupied in telling legends of the holiness, the happiness, the visions and the miracles of nuns; she drew the future in glowing colors, she judiciously hinted at unkind things said of Viola by Northville people, and how these people were looking to have Viola come back home, saying she had been all wrong, and had made a mistake. She fostered the girl's petty pride, and in telling tales of testimony borne by novices to heretics, and of their apt replies and pious sayings to their friends, gave Viola material from which to construct her own conversation with her father.

The day of the visit came. Mr. Hastings arrived at the convent, and was at once conducted by a brightly smiling nun to Mother Vallé's parlor, where a missal

in scarlet and gold, a bouquet of flowers and a band of sunbeams had been admitted to grace the occasion.

Mother Vallé greeted her guest, rang a bell and presently Viola entered, clad in her best, and looking, as she really was, very glad to see her father. She advanced to him and gave her hand, drew back when he offered to kiss her, and taking a seat between the two nuns who escorted her, said,

"I am very glad to see you, father, and how are all my friends?"

"They are all well," said Mr. Hastings; "but it is so long since I have been able to see you, or hear from you, that I did not know in what condition I should find you."

"I am well and happy as you see," said Viola. "No news is good news, you remember, and when you do not hear from me, you can be sure all is well."

"If our dear daughter were ill of course you would be notified," said Mother Vallé.

"But I hav'n't been ill at all," said Viola.

"I have been very anxious about you," said Mr. Hastings.

"Why should you be?" said Viola. "I am perfectly safe, I am doing my duty, and living the life that is most suitable and pleasing to me."

"Are you indeed happy, my child?"

"Certainly I am," said Viola.

"Daughter," said Mr. Hastings, seriously, "speak honestly to me; do not be afraid to utter the simple truth. We are all anxious to have you at home. Will you not come? If you wish to leave this house do not be afraid to say so; no one shall hurt you; I will take you out at once."

"I have no such wish, father," said the infatuated girl, bent on her own destruction. "This is a very good home and this is my chosen life, you have children enough without me!"

"Daughter, I have not!" cried Mr. Hastings; "you have your own peculiar place in my heart; you were your mother's only child, my eldest born. You are very dear to me. Viola, come home with your father; oh, child, you have your mother's eyes, and I loved her well!" The man's voice broke in sobs.

Viola had not expected such an appeal, she had never seen her father so moved—she faltered a little, she was almost ready to cry out, "Father, forgive me and take me home." But a nun on one side whispered softly, "Why did he not show some of that love when he had you?" and a nun on the other side whispered "Ah, take you to be everybody's laughing-stock!" and Viola's moment of grace was gone. She replied calmly,

"I am glad to know you love me, father, I shall often think of it; but why do you wish me to leave

this place where I am shut out from all the cares and troubles of earthly life?"

"Can you not see from your child's very appearance that she is happy and well cared for?" said Mother Vallé.

"Dear Mother Vallé, let my father see the garden where I work, the lovely chapel where we pray, our sacristy with its library, and the room where the novices gather in the evening, and let him see that I *must* be happy here," said Viola.

"Willingly, my child," said the artful abbess, who had in recent conversations slyly suggested this speech. So to all these places Viola and the nuns conducted Mr. Hastings—but in the progress the abbess walked by Mr. Hastings, and the nuns kept on either side of Viola, to hinder a word of relenting.

Mr. Hastings when he went home was forced to say that Viola appeared perfectly well, said she was quite happy, and had entirely refused to return home with him. For the present also he must cease to complain that he could not see his child. So Rome in this affair gained a complete victory.

Scarcely a week had elapsed after her father's visit, before Viola's privileges began to be curtailed. She was given tasks in the house instead of in the garden; she no longer sat and ate with the nuns; her paper, pencils, wax and embroidery silks were taken away,

and soon matters were as bad as ever. She ventured to ask why this was, for what reason were the promised privileges denied; and she was told that favor had made her proud and self-willed, that her presuming to question concerning the course of her superiors savored of disobedience and rebellion, and conclusively proved that a lowly position best befitted her! Viola sighed—she knew she had never yielded either to father or mother that deference and obedience which she was forced to accord to the nuns.

In describing Viola's trials we have not mentioned that which was the sorest to her naturally proud and impatient disposition. This was the state of entire vassalage in which she was kept, the slavish obedience that was required in every tone, act and look. She could not accept from the hand of another the most trifling article, even a pin or a bit of cord, without permission from a professed nun; she could not dress or undress, wash her hands or comb her hair, without asking liberty from a nun. At supper, taking her turn with others, she knelt by the nun at the head of the table and read a lesson from some appointed book. Liking display and precedence, it was some consolation to her when it fell to her lot at "complins," or night prayers at eight, to read the prayers to the nuns, novices and postulants, who came in solemn procession to the chapel. At four in the

morning she must go with the others to chapel to make the "Stations of the Cross," kneeling and praying twelve times—and Viola had always loved to lie in bed. On her first entering the convent of Seven Sorrows, she had been ordered to give up all that she had worn on her arrival—a chain, a birth-day gift from her father, and a ring containing a lock of her dead mother's hair being the dearest sacrifices. Besides all these things she was constantly liable to the most humiliating penances, incurring them by the transgression of trivial rules of which she was ignorant, or by failing to perform some task with the scrupulous exactness demanded by the novice mistress. Daily these troubles accumulated. The second year of novitiate was entered upon, and as its days and weeks lapsed slowly Viola often, in agony of spirit, wished she had thrown herself into her father's ready arms and begged him to deliver her from the misery she had rashly chosen.

We see how greatly the boasted convent influences failed to be softening and purifying to Viola Hastings. The girl chafed and fretted under all this excessive restraint; she grew gloomy, morbid, bitter; hers was an angry spirit, repressed but unsubdued, and singular mental symptoms appeared in her at times, which in a loving home would have been met by tender, judicious care. Angry, and growing more

angry still, this girl waited for the day of assuming the black veil, a day which she had been told, and fondly believed, would end all her troubles.

While she waited, the doors of the convent of Seven Sorrows opened to receive a spirit if possible more foully injured, and, indeed, more innocently suffering than herself—Maria Felix. What charge there was against this unhappy woman more than that she was helpless and unhappy, and could find nothing in her creed to make her less so, none could say. Father Arnholm asserted that she was not making good confessions, that she continually withheld something, and that she did not lend a believing ear to what he taught. What superhuman knowledge the padre boasted that discerned the "something" withheld, and the unspoken unbelief, we know not. But cruelty, fairly outshining itself, condemned Maria Felix to be sent for hard labor and complete subjection to Seven Sorrows, as in France poor wretches are sent to the galleys; and going there, she was given, like a wild beast, a keeper, and that keeper was Pauline Anna, whom it was worth while to bring from her teaching at Northville for this purpose.

Pauline Anna came down with haste; good Mother Church had put her she hated under Pauline Anna's feet. Sister Maria Felix had once mildly taken precedence, but now the wheel of fortune, which even in

convents revolves, had carried Pauline Anna up to be a hard mistress, and had swept Maria Felix down to be her miserable slave.

Maria Felix was neat and refined in her tastes; she had been brought up in respectability and all decency, mind you, and we may try to imagine how hard it was for her not to be allowed to change her clothing but once in several months, and never to have her knife, fork or spoon washed. Saint Paul says something about cleanliness and godliness, which I suppose Mothers Vallé and Denny had never heard, or having heard, had forgotten. Maria Felix came as a sort of maid-of-all-work, the heaviest and most servile tasks were hers, she cleansed the drains and cellars, she was like the Gibeonites a hewer of wood and a drawer of water; grates and stoves were for her to clean out with her hands, no poker or shovel being given her; the lamps were her care also, and her fingers and not scissors were the implements for trimming the wicks. At all these tasks, which lasted unceasingly from half-past three in the morning until eight at night, Maria Felix was attended by Pauline Anna, who stood over her shoulder, taunting her, sharply commanding and often as sharply pinching her.

Maria Felix ate from a wooden dish, seated meanwhile behind the kitchen door; she was locked in her

cell at night, and at hours of prayer was put on her knees at the chapel door, where she remained while the long train of nuns, novices, postulants and pupils filed by. Father Arnholm refused her absolution, and thus she was debarred approaching the Sacrament, but Maria Felix pined little over this, for she had come secretly to believe the priestly absolution little worth, and had found in the Sacrament no comfort to her soul. These griefs and this severe discipline wore little on Maria Felix's health. She was naturally strong, and years of more or less exposure, labor and privation had tended to harden her. She was of an age when she did not, like the young novices, droop under vexations and fatigues. Thus far she endured well; she was one of those who would not wear and fade slowly day by day, but would bear up until the final moment, and be broken all at once.

The effect of her present position on her mind was at first pitiful. She became utterly abject in her submission, and degraded in her servitude. Perhaps she thus sought to soften her condition and appease her tyrants.

But "even worms will turn in rage at last." There came a day when in Maria Felix's estimation patience had had its perfect work and ceased to be a virtue. When slowly revolving months had shown that humility was to have no recompense, when meek-

ness was ever repaid by cruelty, Maria Felix returned to the spirit of her early days.

She had been sent to the convent of Seven Sorrows in the Lent of the second year of Viola's novitiate. While Viola was enduring in sullen and ill-concealed rage, Sister Maria Felix was enduring in gentleness and meekness; when Viola began to take more courage from the thought that the end of her probation approached, when the waxing summer told of the day when her last vows would lift her to what she hoped was a higher and freer plane, Maria Felix took midnight counsel with herself, and resolved to revenge her wrongs and break her bonds.

Our story has drifted on through several years. Viola is now past twenty, Magdalen several months her senior, and Philip, whom we first found a weeping boy beside his mother's corpse, has grown to manhood's stature, and is in his twentieth year. His advance along the clerical grades had been slow, at his own request, based on a desire for longer study and further acquaintance with his duties and responsibilities.

Fathers Arnholm and Ansel, and in fact all the fathers and the high and mighty bishop himself, were not averse to having their young man in a subordinate office, and more fully in leading-strings for a longer time. In truth the acolyte they had nourished

was a problem to them. In their view, Philip had a most distressing honesty, a bold frankness, and a singular way of looking at common people as if they had souls which needed to be saved by truth, and not by "pious beliefs" with a different version for greater people. Yet, they looked forward to the time when their pupil should attain his majority, and should come in possession of a nice little property which he might lay at the feet of the Church.

Thus much for the priests; as for the acolyte, though he had been "born blind," he was now coming to that stage of vision where he "saw men as trees walking." He was running in the old ruts, saying the words and doing the deeds of long habit, but by exercise of his natural powers and by influence of his cousins he was being slowly enlightened, and believed less and less in the dogmas of Rome, the superstitions and mummeries of his Church, and sometimes wondered if he were not a hypocrite to pretend to believe them at all.

When the Romanist wakes up to the idea that his supposed palace is a prison, the first door which he finds whereat to be gone is infidelity. He has been so often told that his Church is the only true Church, the most ancient and credible Church, that when he loses his faith in her he has faith in nothing. We speak not of those Romanists who are brought out of

their darkness by religious instruction from Protestants, by Bible reading and by the preaching of the gospel, but of those who work out escape for themselves. As Philip developed into manhood, he could not believe with his Church authorities* that the freedom of the press, liberal clerical associations, the civil contract of marriage, education outside of the Roman Catholic Church, the objects and functions of legislation (except as in case of Hon. John Smith's obtained appropriations!), the modern idea of sound and free government, democracy, republicanism, and the objects, powers and results of modern scientific investigation were to be classed as pantheism, materialism, socialism and ritualism. Any one desirous of seeing how popery has liberalized since Smithfield and Bartholomew, will do well to refer to this Syllabus.

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There had been times, many times, when *a servant of God* had entered the convent of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows. He came an uninvited, but unhindered guest; bolts and bars kept not out his immaterial essence. Men have pictured him clad in white, wreathed with cypress, trailing a reversed torch, God's mighty messenger of good and ill who disenchants the soul from bodily thraldom, and leads it up,

*Syllabus of Pope Pius IX., 1864.

all smiling and baptized with gladness, to its Father's presence and its elder Brother's throne; or gravely biddeth unchallenged, "Come away," and bringeth downward, downward, where they wail and gnash their teeth.

This servant of the Most High now came on his mission. In God's wise counsel Mother Vallé's life had touched its limit. Death sent a red and hot-breathed fever as his courier, and when this had stood at his post inexorable for days, out of the twilight's far-stretching regions came the still messenger himself, who never heeds appeal. Here in the evening what do we see? The white-covered bed, the clothing stirred by Mother Vallé's hard breathing, three nuns kneeling on either side repeating the prayers for the "agonizing," and wailing out the "Memorare"—"Remember, O most pious Virgin Mary, that no one ever had recourse to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy mediation, without obtaining relief," etc. Upon Mother Vallé's bosom a nun had laid a crucifix that had been blessed by the Pope and kept by the superior for this hour of need. In her chill, damp hand they placed that seal called the "Agnus Dei," made of wax consecrated for Pius IX. in the year when he ascended the papal throne. At the bed's foot stood Ansel and Arnholm. They had exhorted, had approved, had prayed for the dying superior. To Arnholm she had confessed, from him

received absolution; the Sacrament had been administered, the wafer laid on her blue lips. Now as she was passing was she comforted?

The hollow eyes shone with a wild light; ever and anon the wasted figure shook from head to foot, but the lips so long accustomed to silence closed firmly over any secret horror;—she would leave no word to darken her memory when she was dead. Again that sharp convulsion. Arnholm whispered to Ansel—what did he say? "She dies hard—she dies as hard as I do," and, looking back on two horrible scenes, well did Father Arnholm know how hard he died!

"She dies hard, she dies hard;" was that the only requiem for the passing spirit? for now the fierce light no longer shines, the sharp tremors shake the frame no more, the cold hand freezes into ice, she has gone, gone for ever from the convent, from the Church, from the priest and the sisters; the so-called Bride of Christ is carried away by death.

There is for the abbess a lying in state, a sombre magnificence in a chapel hung in black, with great candles burning night and day, crosses and holy water, the red square upon the bosom with "I. H. S." worked thereon in gold. There were missals and masses, solemn requiems and vigils and prayers; the mother of three convents was on her bier, and the *lips* of her daughters bewailed her death.

While others were chanting and praying and making vows and processions, Maria Felix was given by her hard mistress, Pauline Anna, still harder tasks. Like Pharaoh, Pauline augmented the labor and withheld the means of accomplishment, and alas! she made no scruple of striking her charge many a wicked blow. But while she was thus tasked and insulted, Maria Felix planned her means of escape, and that by no heroic and unexampled method, but by use of a little strategy, dexterity and strength.

There were two doors to the front entrance of Seven Sorrows, and for the lock of each was the same large key, kept by Pauline Anna who acted as porteress. From the outer door came the spring of a bell which struck in the inner hall whenever the door was opened. To clean this bell and to fill the hall lamp were parts of Maria's labors, and, in the extra work consequent upon the death and lying in state of Mother Vallé, these tasks were one day left until late in the evening. Thus came providentially Maria's opportunity. "Polish the bell," said Pauline Anna, and as Maria Felix rubbed away at the brass her keeper sat down in the hall, tried to take a nap with one eye open, and entertained herself by hammering on the arm of her chair with the key of the hall-door, which hung by a cord at her waist. Polishing her bell, Maria Felix covertly unhinged the spring;

if nothing came of the attempt she meditated, she might get a blow for setting the spring out of joint, but no more harm would be done.

"It's polished, sister," said Maria.

"Come after the oil, then," said Saint Pauline, taking the dim little lamp and sending Maria Felix down the cellar stairs before her.

The oil was kept in a small vault or inner cellar, to which several steps led down; there was a door which Pauline unlocked, and by leaning in and reaching sidewise Maria Felix could take the oil-can from a little shelf. Never having been taught the sacredness of truth, Maria Felix made no difficulty of saying, "The oil isn't in here, sister."

"Yes it is," retorted Pauline.

"No, there is no can, some one has taken it away," said Maria, apparently carefully feeling for the can.

"How could they, when I have the key!" cried Pauline.

"Then it has fallen down," said Maria Felix, seeking with treacherous hands again. "I can't find it, sister."

"Let me look, stupid!" exclaimed Pauline, impatiently.

She set down her lamp, pushed Maria away roughly, clasped the side of the door and swung herself round to reach the missing can. Maria Felix

grasped the door key with one hand, and with the other pushed Pauline with all her strength, throwing her headlong down the inner steps. She then closed the door, locked it, blew out the light, hid the key in the folds of her gown, and sped toward the upper hall, all excitement; for now if she missed her aim some fearful reckoning would be in store for her, for assaulting Pauline Anna. Nearly all the nuns were in the chapel chanting prayers for the repose of Mother Vallé's soul. No one expected any disturbance, for Pauline Anna was known to be vigilant, and Maria Felix very meek and quiet.

Favored even beyond her expectations, Maria gained the front door unseen, let herself out and locked it behind her. The outer door opened, and the bell gave no tell-tale warning. Maria locked that also and hurried along the street. She took off her rosary and crucifix as she ran in the shadow of the houses, tore away the red woolen heart which hung over her bosom, and as she hurried toward the depôt whence started the Northville train she flung away the convent key in Madonna street. Next morning a small boy out on his explorations found this key and sold it at the lock and key depôt on Gabrielle street for the immense sum of five cents.

Through Gabrielle street and along the wharves Maria Felix went running in the late September

evening. Pauline Anna had that day in anger torn off her victim's black bonnet and veil, and given her a kerchief to wear instead, and this kerchief was now the escaped nun's only head gear.

Maria Felix found as she had hoped a train about to leave. It was a night express, making but few stops. Entering a car with not many occupants she sat down and looked steadily out of the window into the darkness. She did not turn about until some little time after the train was in motion the conductor came to her saying, "Ticket!" Now our nun had neither money nor ticket, and when the conductor touched her arm, repeating "Ticket," she turned slowly, saying "I hav'n't any."

"Pay fare, then."

"I have no money," said Maria.

"Oh, lost it? where are you going?"

"As far as the train goes," said Maria, desperately.

"But you can't without paying," said the official.

Maria sighed heavily and turned away. Her appearance was so mild and sorrowful that the man pitied her and passed on, meditating that it was not worth his while to check the train for one such poor wanderer, but that at the first stopping-place he would ask her to leave the car. He returned after a while, saying, "I must put you off the first stop."

"Where is that? Northville?" asked Maria.

"No, about halfway there."

"Are there any other trains there?"

"Yes, but come now, you can't ride for nothing—don't try it. Have you no money, not a cent?"

Maria Felix shook her head.

"Well, really, I'm sorry for you. Here," he added, taking out his wallet, "this will pay for your lodging, don't try to pirate any more rides."

"Why not let me stay on the train, instead," said Maria, drawing back from the money.

"Well," the conductor hesitated, "well, I'll let you stay on as far as Northville."

"No, no," cried the runaway, quickly, "I can't stop there, I don't wish to go there. Put me off where you said, that is just where I want to go."

The man began to think her crazy; but he dropped on her lap the note he had twisted up, and went his way. At the first stopping-place he beckoned her, and passing from the car she hurried out of sight in the shadows. The train delayed but a moment. When it was gone the nun looked about, and saw another train ready for motion, the engine glaring up the track and breathing clouds of steam. Desperate to be going somewhere, Maria Felix entered a car. Again there were but few passengers, and one of these was a lady comfortably arranging herself for a night's journey. Maria Felix took the seat behind her.

Had this unhappy nun known the course of wisdom and safety she would have gone to Northville, and secretly thrown herself upon the kindness of Magdalen or Judith Vaughn; but her only desire was to get away from any one who had ever known her. She sighed unconsciously but heavily many times before the conductor came along crying "Ticket!"

"I hav'n't any," said Maria.

"Money then!" he said, brusquely.

The poor creature held out the money she had received on the other train.

"How far do you want to go?"

"To the end of the road," said the ignorant traveler.

"This won't begin to take you there."

"It is all I have."

The conductor took the next traveler's ticket and passed on, meditating.

Poor Maria, overcome by the perils of her way, leaned her head against the window and burst into a passion of weeping. It was a thing she had not done for years, but she had made herself a free woman in the last few hours, and she could now cry like other people. To the lady on the seat before Maria Felix, God had given a kind heart and a full purse. The sorrows even of strangers touched her easily; she turned about and courteously addressed to the weep-

ing nun the question, "Madam, have you not money enough to pay your fare?"

"He says not," said Maria. "I didn't know how much it was, and I want to go to the end of the road."

"Is it necessary?" asked the stranger.

"It is life or death," cried Maria, passionately.

The lady turned away for a moment, then spoke again.

"Permit me to buy your ticket," she said; "I can do it very easily."

Several little sobs were poor Maria's only answer, but the lady paid the fare when the conductor came back, and Maria kept her dollar still. The nun drew a breath of relief when this was done. She watched the long drifts of sparks streaming by as the cars rushed on, and somehow began to think of the little lamp she had blown out in the cellar of Seven Sorrows; of how soon the sisters would miss her; how they would get the front door open; when Pauline Anna would be released from the vault; and whether she were much hurt or not. Maria Felix hoped not. Then she pondered on the dead abbess, and wondered if her soul came back to see that lying in state, and what was the future spreading before her, eternity without a change. From these reveries she was roused by the lady who had paid her fare, continuing

her kindness by offering her refreshments. Maria Felix had had but a crust for her supper, and she was undeniably hungry. She ate thankfully, and as she ate she wondered where she had seen this lady before. She might well wonder, for it was no other than Judith Vaughn, who had just come down from Northville. Judith had only seen Maria Felix once or twice, and then in full nun's attire. It was no wonder that now she did not recognize her in the partial light of the car lamp, and deprived of the most distinguishing portion of her dress. As for Maria Felix, she, nun-like, had never looked Judith squarely in the face, and could not now recall when and where she had seen one like the stranger who now befriended her. Perhaps had their eyes met in the light of day, there would have been a mutual recognition, but this was not to be. Judith went to sleep; but Maria Felix was wakeful and anxious, she feared to go into the large city which she now understood was the terminus of the route. Trying in vain to form some plan for her future, she could only vaguely resolve to keep out of everybody's way. About daybreak the train stopped to take in wood. The station was a miserable lonely place, just such a place as suited a fugitive, and at once making up her mind to get off there, she stole down on the other side of the track from the wood-yard, and hurried

away, leaving Judith to wake and wonder. Taking a way apart from all houses, Maria hastened through dewy fields and lanes for several hours. She stopped at a little shanty calling itself a grocery, and bought some dusty crackers and dry gingerbread from a sleepy woman; then on, on where all was silent and lonely. She grew very weary, the sun was well up, she needed some place to hide and rest. At last she found such refuge. She was passing through a sterile and ill-kept farm. Three small houses, long since deserted, and ready to topple over from very age, leaned against and cordially supported each other. An unhappy barn left out of this confederacy remained lonely in the field, with nothing to console it but a small hay-mow, while four others, unwilling to trust themselves as props to such tottering age, were stationed just out of harm's way, with their ladders at their sides, like soldiers shouldering arms. To the mow, half within and half without the barn, did Maria Felix betake herself. She clambered to the top and hid herself in the fragrant hay. She had slaked her thirst at a running stream hard by, and now ate some of her crackers, and then worn out by her fatigues composed herself for a sleep.

A day passed in such circumstances one would suppose uneventful; but to the daughter of the convent all life was new. White and purple pigeons fluttered

in and out, and billed and cooed and plumed themselves in dusty shafts of sunshine. Little boys came to the stream and waded barefoot through the clear waters, in open defiance of recent maternal counsels, and fished with twine and crooked pins for minnows half as long as their own small fingers. Before Maria's watching eyes crept an old woman digging roots to brew beer, and two scant-frocked, sunburned girls clambered the fences to gather sumac for dyeing. Seated far out of sight, her presence known only to the birds and the paper-making wasps, who know how to keep secrets, the truant nun rested all day, ate a frugal supper at evening, and, when the day was fairly done and the birds were all in bed, she slipped from her hiding-place and followed the course of the brook, which spread and widened and took deeper banks, and was first fringed with rushes, then with willow and alder bushes, and then with statelier growths.

The harvest moon was rounding to the full, and as Maria Felix pressed along the unfrequented country road she saw a river shining through the trees, its little ripples leaping in the light like tongues of fire. But she knew that the rivers are the highways of a busy world, and by them the earth's toilers dwell. If she would fly from human habitations she must fly the rivers too. So she found a narrow path lead-

ing over a thinly-wooded hill, and this path she set herself to follow. One after another the hills rose slowly, sweeping back into the country. There were straggling rail fences, fields filled with the shocks of newly-cut corn, standing like regiments drawn up for inspection. There were narrow gullies full of tearing briars, and treacherous stones whereon the wayfarer stumbled. The dews were heavy and the night was chill. Exertion, insufficient food and clothing, fright and pain had gained the mastery even over this woman who had endured so well; her limbs ached, her head reeled and throbbed, her heart beat fast, her steps grew more and more feeble, she felt ready to lie down and die; and oh, it would be sweet to die away from persecution and rude questioning and foolish mummeries of the dying hour. She thought of Philip, gave a tender hope that he would prosper, wondered if they were seeking her from the convent. Then, as it was growing day, she sat down on a great stone in a fence-corner and held her aching head in her hands. Some cows were wandering about in this field, and just after sunrise a woman, a clean, stout, motherly creature, came from a small house, a milk-pail in either hand, and called the brutes to her in a cheery tone. When she had sat down at her milking, Maria Felix went to her across the field;—"Why, what is this!" cried the woman.

"Please are you a Catholic?" said Maria Felix.

"No, thank the Lord—nor ever was," said the woman.

"For if you are, kill me at once," said Maria, whose mind was beginning to wander from fever.

"Bless me, I'm little like to kill anybody. Are you crazy!" cried the woman, starting up.

Maria grasped her hand, fell at her feet too weak to stand and told her pitiful story. The woman listened amazed, and into her heart crept meanwhile, along with the nun's tale, a voice that has dropped down to us from a day to come—"I was a stranger and ye took me in." She raised the wanderer to her feet, held one strong arm about her, and guided her feeble footsteps to the house, where she soon made her comfortable in bed, in a clean quiet room, and administered her such simple medicine of hot herb teas as her small knowledge judged the best. Nor was she alone in her sympathizing care. All the family, father, mother, young daughter and stalwart son, were determined to befriend the sick stranger who had wandered to their door.

At the convent of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows, the absence of Pauline Anna and her charge, Maria Felix, was not noticed until the four o'clock morning prayers. The house was then searched, and after a time Pauline Anna was found, somewhat bruised and

furiously indignant. Father Arnholm was sent for, who concluded the fugitive must have gone to Northville; but a telegram to Father Ansel undeceived him. By evening, about the time when Maria Felix was leaving her hay mow, she had been tracked to the train in which she had met Judith Vaughn. Arnholm and Ansel put themselves in pursuit, Ansel taking Philip with him, being too coarse in his own nature to suppose that the acolyte would have any objections to hunting down his aunt like a wild beast. Philip kept his own counsel; he went along as he was bidden, but he shuddered at the threats of his priestly comrades, and remembered the cathedral dungeons.

Having followed the escaped nun to the station where she left the train, Arnholm took one road while Philip and Ansel went another, and Ansel presently called in the aid of the village priest, and by diligent inquiry they tracked their quarry to the shanty where she had bought something to eat. Here they lost her, the wasps and the pigeons knowing better than to tell tales to priests.

CHAPTER XV.

WHEN PHILIP IS TWENTY-ONE.

THE birds and the wasps, the little brook and the sumac bushes told no tales, yet while Maria Felix was lying ill in her place of refuge Philip, Ansel and the other priest were riding in search of her along the same river-road which she had traveled with weary steps. The three were on horseback. "Let us search every house," said Ansel; so they inquired (compassionately for a poor crazy creature) at every dwelling, and to Philip's joy found no one. They reached the path winding over the hills. "We have no time to lose," said Ansel. "Philip, ride over there and meet us at the village two miles below."

Philip turned his horse up the path. As he surmounted the hill other hills bathed in golden autumn light lay before him. The nearer prospect was russet, farther off it was glorified to purple, and more distant still blue mists veiled every object. Into those blue depths Philip wished he might ride far away, a young knight-errant, seeking Atlantis, and return no more

to priestly thraldom. On he rode, and came to a low, red farm-house. He was thirsty, he would stop and put Ansel's question; nothing would come of it; he hoped nothing would come of any of their questions; the business would be ended some time, and no capture made. He tied his horse to the brown, weather-beaten fence, and then stood on the threshold of the kitchen, a well scrubbed kitchen, cool and clean, with rows of shining tins along the walls, and chains of apples hung to dry, depending from the beams of the ceiling. No one was within, but Philip heard from a room whereof the door was ajar a creaking, very low, as if one rocked a cradle. To that door he stepped, and pushed it a little. All was plain now; there was his aunt, Maria Felix, lying in a heavy sleep, her face flushed with fever, and by her side a kind, strong, quiet woman, swaying a palm-leaf fan above the sleeper's face.

The woman looked up—Philip beckoned her and stepped back—the woman came to him.

"They are looking for her," he said, speaking low.

"They sha'n't have her then," said the woman briskly.

"You need not be afraid of me, I am her nephew, and shall not do anything to harm her. But can you not keep her more secluded than that? Others might have walked in here as I have. Can't you keep her

up stairs? And don't tell the neighborhood whom you have here."

"Never fear, I know how to be silent," said the woman.

"I hope for my own sake you do. If it is known that I found this woman here and came away and said nothing, my life would have very little comfort in it afterward. Can you keep my having been here secret?"

"Trust me," said this woman, a look growing into her homely face which gave token that, simple and common as she seemed, there was in her the good strength that if need be can die for a principle, or point of honor.

"Take good care of her," said Philip, "her life has been hard."

"Trust me," said the woman again.

"Keep her out of sight, and let no strangers in. Do not tell even her that I have been here." He turned to go, then came back, "Stay, I may send a lady here, my aunt's cousin and mine. Have confidence in her, but trust no one else."

He opened the door and looked once more, lovingly, pityingly, on the fever-flushed face, and went his way. He forgot that he was thirsty, but rode fast to the village.

"Found anything?" asked Ansel.

"Plenty of burs," said Philip, coolly, picking them off his clothing. "Don't send me up any more cow-paths. Why don't you drag the river?"

"It is more than likely she has drowned herself," said the strange priest.

"It is idle looking this way at all," said Philip. "My aunt is not likely to get so far without money, and knowing no road. She doubtless got on another train. Let us keep to the railroads."

"Confound the woman," said Ansel. "I wish she were dead and in her grave."

"Very likely she is," said the other priest, who did not entirely relish hunting women.

That Maria Felix was dead was the conclusion all her pursuers came to after a time, and the search was abandoned; for the God who had led her out of her house of bondage had mercifully covered her traces and given her safe retreat, by very simple means.

* * * * * *

There was presently at "Seven Sorrows" a pompous burial. Then Mother Denny was made superior in the room of Mother Vallé, and next the two years novices took the black veil. At last the long hoped-for day had come to Viola. She looked back on the period of novitiate feeling that death would be preferable to passing through it again, and her only hope was that now a different and better life was to open to her.

The ceremony was attended with all the pomp and display so indispensable to the rites of the Romish Church. Music and incense filled the air, flowers and lights and gilding burdened the altars, the waxen virgin wore a new robe of white silk sprinkled with pearls and wrought about the hem with golden lilies, a present from the House of Charity and Saint Vincent de Paul. Among the visitors who had received tickets to the chapel was no one who knew or cared for Viola. She had cut herself off from family and friends, and on this fatal day she formally resigned her small property into the hands of her spiritual directors.

On the evening of that day Viola walked in the line of professed nuns to prayers, and then retired alone to her own cell. The door closed behind her; her long-desired black veil fell over her shoulders; she dropped on her knees before her crucifix. That satisfaction, that hope, that comfort which she had sought were far away. Her heart sank in her bosom like lead; before her the future, the future of her own rash choice, stretched darker and darker. For her the door of hope was closed for ever. The black veil of despair would never be lifted from her spirit.

Her tears streamed over her cheeks; henceforth *she* could look for no loving hand to wipe her tears

away. Her head ached and throbbed; that head had now, would never have, better resting-place than the hard pillow of her pallet, or the cold damp floor of her prison cell.

On this very evening Magdalen had been thinking and speaking much of Viola. She had seen Mr. Hastings, whose sorrow for his deceived and unhappy child seemed constantly increasing. He had not seen her or heard from her for a year. Just before sunset Philip, who had called at Mrs. Courcy's, asked Magdalen to take a walk with him, through a pleasant lane leading back from the house. When they were fairly out of everybody's hearing, Philip said,

"I asked you to come out here because I have a secret to tell you, a very important one that needs close keeping, and I know that you, Magdalen, speak no idle or inconsiderate words. When we were away lately, I found my aunt. I found her sick and among poor people. For my life I would not have told it to those who went to capture her; but you see that I can neither visit nor help her—it would lead to her destruction."

"And you want me to see and help her, and I will," said Magdalen.

"Do not tell your mother; she might let it be known, and you see, Magdalen, the position in which I am placed."

"I see; but I must tell some one—I cannot go alone—and that some one shall be Judith Vaughn."

Philip sighed, as he and Magdalen reached the lane's end and returned toward the house. "Ah, Magdalen, in your faith there are some to be trusted; in mine, not one, not one!"

"Philip, how can you remain with those whom you trust so little?"

"Where else should I remain? It is my business to be a priest."

"And to be a priest, with your present feelings, means to be a most miserable hypocrite," said Magdalen, with spirit. "You know well, Philip, that every human being has an immortal soul, and He who has so bountifully made provision for the needs of the body must have also made a provision for the greater needs of the soul. Yet what does your Church offer souls but falsehoods and absurdities? If she advances a grain of truth she at once takes it away by contrary statements. You, Philip, will be a priest, and prate to men of Christ's real presence in the mass. You will tell your ignorant people that you are offering, in expiation of their sins, the real body of your Lord. You will bid them kneel to what you call the victim, and will hold on high what you call the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus;—as if you, a man, would not be crushed to powder by such a mighty load! How

dare you teach such things when all your reason cries out against it? when you have read in my Bible 'Christ was once offered,' and 'now *once* in the end of the world has appeared to put away sin?'"

"But, Magdalen, what harm does it do, if they believe it?"

"What harm, Philip! Men go to destruction believing in a *lie,* and yours are the lips that tell it. You babble of the 'unbloody sacrifice,' when you know that the shedding of blood is necessary to sacrifice—and 'without shedding of blood is no remission.' Dare you spend your life putting souls in peril, and go down to death burdened with their loss and your own?"

"What am I to do?" asked Philip, meekly.

"To do!" cried his cousin; "you are to study Protestantism and become wise unto salvation. Protestantism does not shun being examined in the broad light of truth, and searched by the bright lamp of God's written word. She is the child of day, the daughter of heaven. Study Protestantism, Philip, and you will find what in Romanism you have sought in vain."

The two had stopped to finish their conversation under a thorn tree, in full sight of the parlor-windows; in sight also, but not in hearing, of Mrs. Courcy and Father Ansel who sat therein. The

thorn tree hung red with berries, and as Magdalen spoke Philip restlessly pulled off berries and leaves and twisted them into a bouquet, tying it with long grass.

"They are young," said Ansel in the window, "they gather flowers and talk romance. Youth is the time of dreams and pretty fancies."

Two days later Magdalen and Judith Vaughn left Northville together. "Gone to the city to have a good time," said the gossips. "The world runs easily with them—no cares, no troubles," said the envious. While these things were said, Judith and Magdalen went with haste to that lonely and humble farm-house on the barren hill, to carry help and safety to a feeble and suffering body, and to an anxious soul the glad news of Him who saves us "not for works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy." Messengers of peace, they stood in the late autumn days by the long-sorrowful nun, clearing the mists of superstition from the darkened eyes, and bidding her take courage, for there was comfort yet.

Magdalen had told her mother that she had a secret which she was to keep from her.

"That is something new," said Mrs. Courcy.

"Yes, mamma, but do not think me growing worse as I grow older. This secret is not my own, nor of *my seeking.*"

"Ah, it is some of Judith Vaughn's, I dare say. I wonder, is she going to be married at last;" said Mrs. Courcy, with whom marriage was the chief idea. "Well, keep what secret you like, Magdalen; I could trust you to the world's end."

Magdalen and Judith went more than once to the home that sheltered Maria Felix. The last time they were summoned in haste, as she was at the point of death. They were in time to hear her say that the bitterness of death was past, that the Bible she had been studying in her last days shed bright radiance over the darkness, and that, no longer kept far from Jesus by a crowd of saints and angels, martyrs and confessors, her soul could rest in him. Judith Vaughn, as she came back with Magdalen to Northville bringing the coffin of Maria Felix to place it in the burial-ground of the Courcys, reflected thankfully how she had been the unconscious means of aiding her flight and securing her safety. When with simple Protestant ceremonies Maria was buried, Father Ansel gnashed his teeth. So great was his rage that he even swore over it in private to Philip; but Philip's share in his aunt's freedom was not suspected, and he sat tranquilly in the church and listened to Ansel preaching a terrible sermon on the doom of the apostates.

Philip had passed the grade of deacon, the next

step would be the priesthood. That step he had already resolved never to take, and had determined that the day that saw him attain legal age should see him take up his abode at Mrs. Courcy's and declare himself free of Rome. It was by no means his intention to throw himself on his cousin's bounty. Once his own master, he would mark out some new line of life and steadily pursue it.

Before that time came he was again at the city and went with Father Arnholm to Gabrielle street. The room of the Connors was inhabited by a family of sturdy Irish disciples of the Church. Philip asked for the Connors. "They are gone West, thanks to that Miss Vaughn who lives at Northville, and thanks to her also they have become as great renegades as ever the sun shone on. There is a day of reckoning coming for these Protestants, and may I be there to see," said the priest, but Philip's heart echoed no amen.

They were passing the lock and key depôt, where the key of Seven Sorrows had been long since filed over to fit something else. The lock and key man came out, saying, "Oh, Mr. Priest, will you stop a minute!" and went on to tell how some poor wretch had rented his upper room, and after a few miserable starving weeks had died there, talking of the sins of his youth, and saying what a good Catholic he had been, but refusing with fierce words to see a priest, and now

the poor-master had been sent for to remove the body.

"We will go up and see it," said Arnholm. "If it is a Catholic he must have Christian burial; but a Catholic would have sent for a priest."

They stumbled up to a dingy, dirty room, and there stretched out on a bare cot, under a soiled sheet, was the body of Ambrose the devout.

"I have found thee, O mine enemy!" hissed Arnholm between his set teeth.

"Will you bury him?" asked Philip.

"I would sooner bury a dog. Did he not strangle me? Did he not steal my silver? Let him burn for ever. I'd sooner tear down the church of the Madonna, than say a mass for *him*."

The priest's face was purple and convulsed with rage. "What hatred, what malice and wrath are harbored in this Babylon!" thought Philip. "Thank God I am coming out of her."

The next night Philip went to see Dominick at the college, and about nine o'clock accompanied Ansel to Father Arnholm. At the church the priest paused:—"Come in, we have a funeral service here."

They entered. Three or four priests stood in the chancel, and a coffin draped in black was placed on tressels in the middle aisle. It was a meagre and dismal service, hurriedly said. Philip looked into the

coffin—the mad priest was dead. He who had suffered in cathedral dungeons was bound in his cell no longer. Whether for better or worse, he was out of the hands of his persecutors; but he was a priest and was receiving Catholic burial. There lay the Northville priest, the doer and indeed the sufferer of great wrong. They had trimmed his unkempt hair and beard, and wrapped in a decent winding-sheet the long half-naked body. The eyes were sunken deep in the head;—Philip thought how they had glared at him over Arnholm's shoulder. The yellow, withered skin was drawn tightly over the high cheek-bones and over the teeth that in maniac fury had bitten and torn. Arnholm was at the altar saying a mass. It seemed a mockery to Philip that the priest should be praying for the wretch whom he had kept in a kennel unfit for a dog, to whom he had flung grudgingly and with taunts insufficient food, and whom he had suffered for days to go half mad with thirst. The Litany for the dead was chanted, not loudly, but low like the burning of the few lamps that swung overhead. Philip joined in his customary part with bated breath; but suddenly remembered the Scripture that the soul of the dead is like a tree which, falling to the north or the south, there it lieth;—why pray for the fate now immutable as the decrees of God?

While one prisoner had thus been made free from

earthly bondage, the miseries of virtual imprisonment were pressing upon the broken and deceived heart of the new nun, Mary Segneri, Viola Hastings. To Seven Sorrows could have come no more unacceptable abbess than Mother Denny; but nuns have no power of choice; their superior is ordained them by their priestly directors. As we know, the convent had been no cheerful or congenial home under Mother Vallé. She had not possessed the faculty of making people happy. But the mourning of the sisters over her death was greatly intensified by the certainty that her successor had and used the power of making people miserable. Self-exaltation and, as inseparably connected with herself, the exaltation of her convents were Mother Vallé's only objects in life. She was strict in rule, she was exacting, she was hard; but she was neither cruel, coarse nor spiteful. These last traits marked the character of Mother Denny. To trample on the fallen, to crush her slaves because they were in her power, to exact the most humiliating and degrading submission to herself simply because she had ability to exact it, were her chief delight.

When Mother Denny came to Seven Sorrows, a gloom deeper than before settled over the house. There was less smiling and talking among the postulants; the altar-flowers were gathered and the waxen dolls were dressed in sombre silence; the eyes of the little or-

phan children grew wistful and yearning, their faces sadder, and like poor little ghosts they went and came. Upon Viola the new rule pressed more heavily than upon any other. She was desperate from long disappointment, furious with the knowledge that she had recklessly thrown away herself. She had not learned so well as the other sisters the advantages of quiet submission and endurance. She rebelled, she was enraged, she threw herself into paroxysms of passion, and she was starved, she was locked up, she had penances to do, and deeper and blacker than the darkness of her novitiate grew the misery of her final profession.

With the parental love that will not relinquish its object, Mr. Hastings sought news of his child. As the second year passed since he had seen her, he pressed his inquiries at the convent, at the priests' houses and at the episcopal residence. His sorrows found their way into the papers and began to attract attention. Not that they were worse than hundreds of parents are suffering whose daughters are gone over to Rome, but the man would not keep still. He told his troubles often and plainly, and like the borrower of three loaves he won by his importunity. The bishop requested him to meet him at his house; he had word for him of his daughter.

"Your daughter is no longer at the Seven Sorrows,

she has been removed to the hospital of the Sisters of Charity."

"What is the matter with my daughter?" demanded Mr. Hastings.

"You need scarcely ask," said the bishop; "she has developed the hereditary insanity which sent her grandmother to an asylum."

"This is the result of the convent!" cried the unhappy parent.

"Pray was her *grandmother* ever in a convent?" asked the bishop.

"I must see my child!" said Mr. Hastings, "nothing but ocular evidence shall satisfy me."

"Cannot you accept my evidence?" asked the prelate.

"I would take the unsupported evidence of no man living."

"Very well," said the bishop, "to show my good will and sympathy, you can go to the hospital and see your child."

"I must take my own physician," said Mr. Hastings.

"The hospital has a regular physician, and no other can attend the patients."

"But he is a Romanist, entirely in your interests."

The bishop shrugged his shoulders. "You are pleased *to be* insulting. However, you can take your

physician to the sacristy of the convent, and he can converse with our own surgeon on the case."

The bishop might plead "hereditary tendencies," but discreet was his silence on the terrible régime which had developed these tendencies.

Viola was brought by a nun to see her father. The sacristy was divided by a high iron lattice, and behind this stood the unfortunate victim of a convent life. Insane indeed she was, hopelessly so, they said, and the nuns and the surgeon declared that at the hospital she had every care. There her father left her; but over his home in all the coming years shall lie the baleful shadow of Rome—an empty chair, a vacant place, a face for ever missed—and to the unhappy father's nightly dreams shall come the wild eyes of the maniac, and her shrill, joyless laugh.

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The law recognizes two periods in the life of the individual, those of infancy and of manhood. The day came when Philip, twenty-one years an infant, stepped at once into the dignities and responsibilities of manhood.

"With my staff I passed over this Jordan," said Jacob, and with no more than a staff, on that day when he had indisputable authority over himself, did Philip go forth out of Babylon.

"Where are you going?" asked Ansel of Philip,

meeting him early at the gate. "Where are you going before breakfast?"

"I am going to have my breakfast at Mrs. Courcy's."

"So indeed, and I trust to-day she will make good her word and hand you over that little sum of ten thousand dollars. Then you must be made a priest. We have waited long enough."

This was admirably patronizing talk to a young man as tall and strong and quite as wise as himself.

"I am going farther than to Mrs. Courcy's," said Philip.

"And where are you going?" demanded Ansel, getting angry.

"I am going out of the Romish Church entirely and never coming back. I am going out of your pastoral charge, and I shall never be a priest, because I cannot be a priest without being a hypocrite, for I do not believe the doctrines of Rome nor do I like her practices."

"Hold, sir, hold, silence!" roared Ansel, so loudly that passers-by turned to look, and by their turning checked and recalled him to himself. "Silence," he said, in a lower tone, "this shall be seen to; your case shall be called in question."

"I put myself in the protection of civil law, and renounce all ecclesiastical authority," said Philip.

"And how came you to behave thus slily and secretly?" cried Ansel.

"Reverend Father," said Philip, coolly, "do you forget that I have been raised a *Jesuit?* In coming out of Jesuitism, I am not free from all its inculcated subtleties. While I renounce the unfruitful works of darkness, I fear that their stain may long yet cleave to me."

"Villain!" cried the Italian, his voice shaking in his fury, "if I had known what you designed you would not stand where you stand to-day."

"I thought so," said Philip, placidly; "so I did not inform you: but I have written to Father Arnholm and the bishop, unfolding my opinions and stating my intentions. Father Ansel, you are wrong and you know it. You know it, and yet you are willing to live by the most cruel of all lies, lies that jeopardize immortal souls."

Father Ansel's face had changed from crimson to purple, and from purple to deathly pale. He opened his mouth wide several times without being able to articulate; but presently a stream of the most fearful maledictions poured forth; cursings of Philip in food and drink, in bed and board, in the clothes he wore, the business he undertook, the air he breathed, the friends he loved, the life he lived and the death he *died.* Curse after curse;—but they died on Philip's

ear as he strode away in the direction of the fair home where lived his faithful friends.

The bishop and Father Arnholm wrote to Philip, desired him to appear before them, condescended to be kind and to argue, to entreat, to persuade. Philip declined to visit them, and Father Arnholm came to him. He warned him of apostasy, he exhorted him, he cajoled, he bribed; Philip should be made a priest at once, should be the bishop's secretary, should be a preacher if he preferred—his eloquence would draw crowds to hear him—he should be preacher in the great Church of the Madonna; indeed the honors and rewards of Rome seemed to lie at his feet. Not thus was Philip to be won to a life he honestly believed wrong. He knew that Romanism was a system as false as it was mighty; its breadth of empire could only be measured by the depths of its iniquities. Rome unconsciously had revealed to him an extent of wickedness and cruelty which is concealed from many of her children. He had heard the voice of God, "Come out of her, and be not partaker of her sins," and coming out he would not even look back. He had not left the Church of Rome for worldly honor or success. He would have had in Romanism high preferment. Yet, in leaving Rome he lost nothing. He took with him much natural ability and a pleasing address; he had heart, brain and hands to put to

the world's work; he was of good family, and had friends high in station; the shining places of the earth were before him, accessible by honest endeavor. And, rising high over all, better and brighter and loftier than all finite things, he saw the imperial summits of everlasting righteousness and reward, prepared for those who love in sincerity the Lord Jesus Christ, and worship not the beast, neither his image, nor have in their hands and upon their foreheads his mark, nor the number of his name.

But while none of these threats, bribes or promises moved the whilom acolyte, one message came after him, one call, one yearning, pitiful cry from the House of Rome which he had left, which stirred his soul. This was nothing else than a letter from Dominick. Hearing of Philip's defection, the old monk mourned as a father mourning over his youngest born, as Jacob over Benjamin. He entreated to be allowed to write to Philip, and when all other means to effect the young man's return had failed, the bishop gave the permission, and through several quiet nights Dominick wrote the letter in his cell. When finished this letter was delivered to the bishop, who carefully considered upon it. It was not by any means what the prelate himself would have written;—what Ansel called Dominick's *unsoundness* had never been more manifestly (although to the writer unconsciously)

visible than in his language to Philip;—and yet from this very "unsoundness," from its very difference from what other priests would say, the bishop did hope that it would prove more effectual in Philip's present state of mind. Once let Philip come back into their hands and the priests would take care of the rest. Let Dominick, in his very want of Romish orthodoxy, be the decoy to bring the escaped prey once more into their power—let him be beguiled back by any wiles whatsoever—only let him come! Thinking thus the bishop forwarded the letter, and in due time it was delivered at Mrs. Courcy's.

"My son, my well-beloved pupil," wrote the old monk, "I am sorely grieved because of you. I have hoped and prayed that you might be chosen of God, to relight the fires of a holy love and a godly zeal on our altars. I trusted that it would be yours to restore to us the faith and purity of an age gone by. Ah, Philip, has my love been fatal to you? Am I so vile that my affections ever destroy their object? No sooner have I loved or pitied or hoped in all my life, but a swift blight has fallen. Philip, my son, I love your soul beyond all things. Why have you broken my heart by turning aside from the most holy faith? They tell me you have become an infidel, that you blaspheme the most holy Trinity, that you revile the glorious Church of God, that you impugn

the divinity of our most precious Lord and Saviour, that you doubt of the immortal life, that you sneer at heaven. Philip, can this be possible? Do you not believe in one God and Father of all, in one blessed Saviour, in our bitter need which his infinite mercy supplied? Entreat that Holy One to give you a better mind, look into your own heart and see how far it is from holiness; where but in Christ can you find a righteousness sufficient to atone for you? Oh, Philip, beware lest if you turn from God he turn from you. If you begin by casting him off, he will cast *you* off for ever. Do you indeed then revile the blessed Sacraments? Do you despise the ordinances of religion, and make a mock of the doctrines of the Church? Does not the epistle bid you beware of heresy? Is there more than one Christ? Can there then be more than one Church? Is Christ divided, or can his Church be divided? Can two bodies of men assert exactly different things and yet both be right? Come back, my son, to the arms of Christian love and counsel; debase not the mind God gave you, to the holding of infidelity. The fool saith in his heart, 'There is no God.' Fools make a mock of sin. Philip, be wise—be wise in time."

Dominick ended his long letter by saying, "I have obtained permission to send you the pictures painted by my dear sister. They are my most cher-

ished, indeed my only possessions. I send them that you may realize how much I love you, and that they may draw back your mind to those better days when you had a filial affection for the mother of our Lord, and when you trusted for redemption in the assured merits of her Son, the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, in whose unlimited power and mercy I leave you, my son Philip."

As he read this letter, Philip wept. He recalled the tenderness, the humility, the piety of Dominick; he remembered his sufferings, his disappointments, the daily sorrows of his life; he knew that the old man had been told false and evil tales of him.

To Magdalen he said, "If I could only see him, if I could only tell him that I am no infidel, that I believe with all my heart these very truths he holds, —except that the Church of Rome is the Church of Christ—what a comfort it would be to him!"

"You cannot go to him prudently, Philip; but I can go for you," said Magdalen. "The church at the college is open every day for visitors, and you tell me they keep the old man in there generally."

"Yes," said Philip, half smiling, "his piety is part of their stock in trade. They keep him there for the good effect he has on visitors. It fills up the contribution boxes, and sends the visitors away with the feeling that Romanism is not so bad as they thought."

"I can go to the city with Judith Vaughn, and remain for a time, and go repeatedly to the church until I see him, and then talk with him about you."

"You can ask him to go through the church with you to explain the pictures, and can then talk to him of me," cried Philip eagerly, "and if you go at two o'clock there are generally very few in the church."

On this mission of comfort to Dominick went Magdalen, and on her second afternoon's visit to the church of St. Ignatius she saw the monk sitting in a recess near one of the confessionals, reading his Breviary. She passed once around the church, looking at altars, ornaments and paintings, to avoid suspicion. Then she stopped just behind Dominick. The old man sighed over his book.

"What troubles you, brother Dominick?" asked Magdalen.

He raised up hastily and recognized her. "Oh, my daughter, this is such a weary, wicked world."

Magdalen thought of the good monk who years ago, sick of the wickedness about him, was driven to write of heaven, and she softly repeated:

"'"Tis fury, ill and scandal,
'Tis peaceless peace below;
Peace ageless, strifeless, endless,
The halls of Zion know.'"

The monk listened with bated breath, as the last

musical accents died away;—"Daughter, say on," he whispered.

"'Strive, man, to win that glory,
Toil, man, to reach that light;
Send hope before to grasp it,
Till hope be lost in sight.'"

"Ah, daughter," said Dominick, "can my corruption inherit incorruption? Can *I* be just with God? Truly my soul pants after Zion, but when I look within, alas my great unrighteousness!"

"But Jesus," said Magdalen, "has atoned for all."

"God forbid that I should limit, or forget it;—yes, when I look to him I find a fullness sufficient to my greatest need. What further says your hymn?"

"'The fouler was the error,
The sadder was the fall,
The ampler are the praises
Of Him who pardoneth all.'"

The slow, sweet syllables dropped from Magdalen's lips like the soft plashing of waters on some fountain's brim.

The monk rose and laid aside his book, "Those are good words, my daughter, but"—he glanced at her wistfully, not daring to utter what was near his heart,—"what would you have of me to-day?"

"Only that you would walk around the church and explain these pictures to me," said Magdalen.

He looked a little disappointed, but responded with French courtliness, "It will give me pleasure, my daughter;" and they began their progress.

"And who are these?" asked Magdalen, as they came to a picture where men in priestly vestments were enduring terrible death.

"The martyrs of our Order, the blessed saints who preached and perished in Japan. Truth, as you know, my child, has always been persecuted."

"Then," said Magdalen, quickly, "there must be some truth in Protestantism. Think of the hosts of Protestant martyrs."

The monk stopped and caught his breath, pressing his hand on his side.

"What is the matter, father?"

"A catching, a catching at my heart,—it will take me suddenly out of the world before long."

"I thought perhaps it was something I had said."

"It was what you said that brought the catching on," said the monk honestly. "My daughter, when a doubt crosses my mind, it is pain indeed."

"But, father," said Magdalen, "have you no certainty that sits smiling above all doubt? Have you no nearness of Christ to your soul, no firm faith in God, a sure earnest of your salvation?"

"Yes, child," said Dominick, slowly, "I believe I have something of this;—why should I fear?"

"Fear nothing," said Magdalen. "Your Redeemer liveth."

"You speak like a pious and well-instructed soul."

They had made the circuit of the church and stood before a large picture representing the first communion of Stanislaus.

"Who are those," asked Magdalen, "who are holding a white cloth under his chin?"

"They are acolytes," replied Dominick, sighing deeply.

"Father, there was once an acolyte whom you loved well—Philip Lester. I came here to-day not so much to see this church as to speak of him."

The monk was much agitated. "Pardon me if I sit down—I am weak to-day," he said. "It cut me to the heart to have him turn infidel."

"You are mistaken, father. He is not an infidel; but after the way which you call heresy, so worships he the God of his fathers."

"And what is heresy but infidelity?"

"It is much beside. He has received your letter. He bids me tell you that he believes what you believe, save and except that the Church of Rome is the infallible Church of God. He worships the Trinity, receives the word of God, accepts the sacraments of the Gospel as the means of grace to his soul,

loves the Sabbath, finds Jesus his only and dear Saviour, and looks to heaven as his final home."

"It is well, it is well," said Dominick, joyously.

"And now, brother Dominick, permit me to ask one question about yourself. Do you trust for salvation to your good works or holy life?"

"My daughter means not to deride me; but my works and life are less than the least, with nothing in them fit for heaven."

"You must then be saved by *faith?*"

"Truly, my daughter."

"And the *object* of that faith," cried Magdalen, eagerly—"Brother Dominick, do you trust to *Mary*, or her *Son?*"

The monk looked down and pondered long. He saw not the scroll carving of the seat he grasped,—his eyes were turned within,—he was looking into his heart before he spoke. The church was still. Afar in one corner a monk was doing penance at a shrine; before the grand altar knelt a woman, a child in either hand, offering to saints vain prayers for a husband on the sea. The great clock ticked slowly, stroke after stroke; to Magdalen it throbbed like a human heart. The wind stealing in turned with viewless hands the leaves of Dominick's open Breviary. Through the open door swung a velvet-coated bee,

bold buccaneer of the garden, and went booming across the church to riot in the votive lilies on Mary's shrine. On a sunbeam a butterfly floated in, and uncertain swayed to and fro, here and there, until, wooed by the perfume of flowers without, he sped away on rainbow-tinted wing. Still there was silence and Magdalen's keen, questioning eyes were fixed on the old man with a softening to earnest, holy light, that told of secret prayer that God would illuminate his darkness, and would breathe his best benison upon his inmost spirit.

To Dominick it was the moment of closest self-examination. He had been asked a plain question, and under its searching his mental life took clear form, and now he had whereof to speak;—"My daughter, I rest my soul on *the crucified Son of the blessed.*"

"And so do I, brother Dominick, and so does Philip. And yet, they call it *heresy.*"

The monk looked sorely troubled. "God will lead us right," he said. "For many years I have striven, though feebly and afar off, to follow the footsteps of the gracious Son of God; his love rises at times upon me the day-beam of my soul. Farewell, daughter; you have brought me comfort. Take Philip my blessing and tell him to be no infidel, but to love the Lord who bought him with a price."

That night, the janitor reported that, at brother

Dominick's request, he had locked him in the chapel, as he was keeping a vigil.

Brother Dominick was keeping a vigil. Perhaps, like Jacob, he met the hosts of God, and the church of St. Ignatius became his Mahanaim.

Once in the night a whisper broke the stillness of those sculptured aisles. It was not the utterance of one of God's angels, sent to minister to the expectant heir of glory; but the expression by that waiting one, now ready to depart, of a loftier love and a higher joy:—"Blessed Jesus, infinite satisfaction of thy people, lo! I come to dwell at thy feet for ever."

The angel who stood in the West cried to the angel who had his hand on the gates of the East, "Watchman, what of the night?" and to them both dropped an answer from an angel speeding to the zenith in the track of a ransomed soul, "The morning cometh!" And when the angel of the East had set wide his gate and bowed his head, crying to the day, "Return, come," a brighter gate had opened higher up, and "come" had been heard from the realm of bliss and of glory far within.

THE END.